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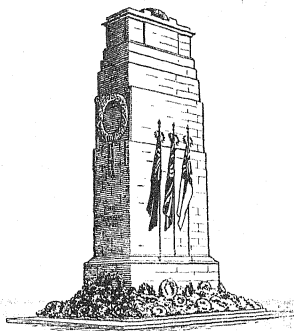
# THE EMPIRE AT WAR

EDITED FOR THE  
ROYAL COLONIAL INSTITUTE

BY

SIR CHARLES LUCAS, K.C.B., K.C.M.G.

VOLUME V



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## PREFACE TO VOLUME V

IN this fifth and last volume, as throughout the whole work, Mr. R. L. Atkinson, M.C., as sub-editor, has given me the greatest help. Mr. Emery Walker, as before, has taken charge of the maps and illustrations, and I am much indebted to him and to his cartographer, Mr. J. F. Staton, F.R.G.S. Mr. C. T. Atkinson, Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford, who from the first has revised the purely military parts of the series, has specially contributed to the present volume, having written on Aden, and, with Sir Francis Younghusband's consent, amplified the military side of the chapters on India. I have been fortunate in retaining his and his brother's co-operation from beginning to end. To Sir Francis Younghusband himself, among many others who have in larger or smaller measure contributed to the volume, I owe grateful acknowledgement, as I do also to Mr. Humphrey Milford and to the efficient and courteous staff both of the Oxford University Press and of the Royal Colonial Institute. It must be borne in mind that the accounts collected in this volume, some of which were prepared a considerable time ago, do not in any way purport to bring the narrative up to the present day, though occasionally, as in the case of Egypt, referring to post-war developments.

Although in no way an official publication the work has, as stated in the Preface to the first volume, been greatly facilitated by the cordial assistance of Government departments both in this country and overseas.

The maps of France, Africa, Aden, and Mesopotamia have been based on maps kindly lent to the Institute by the War Office, and the Historical Section (Military Branch) of the Committee of Imperial Defence has been most helpful in the solution of particular difficulties. The spelling of place-names in this volume follows the rulings of the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names.

INDI

The whole work has taken in all nearly ten years, the difficulties of one kind and another have been great, and there have been not a few disappointments; but it may fairly be said that the Royal Colonial Institute and the Oxford University Press have at least achieved an accurate and comprehensive survey of the actions and the fortunes of all parts of His Majesty's Oversea Dominions in the Great War.

C. P. LUCAS.

December, 1925.

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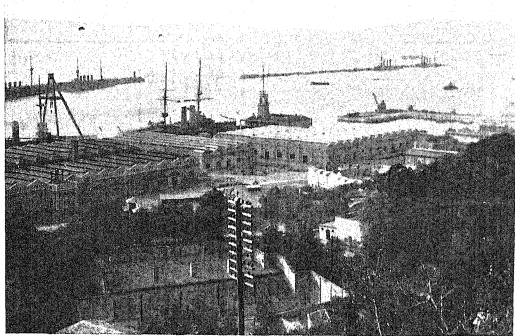
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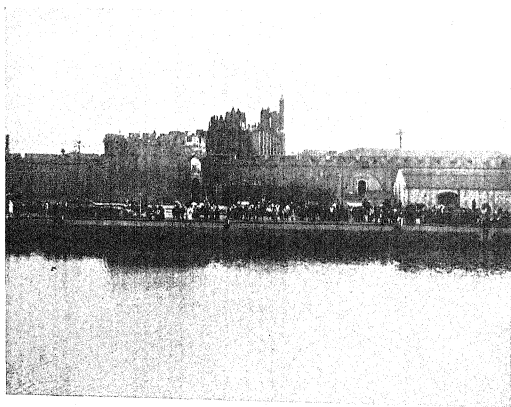


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THE ADMIRALTY DOCKYARD, GIBRALTAR  
(from Europa Main Road)



THE LANDING STAGE, FAMAGUSTA, CYPRUS

## PART I

### THE MEDITERRANEAN COLONIES

THE three British possessions in the Mediterranean, Gibraltar, Malta, and Cyprus, have special interest in connexion with the wars of the Empire. Gibraltar became British in the course of the world war of 200 years ago, Malta in the course of the world war of 100 years ago, while Cyprus, conditionally occupied at a time when an eastern war was threatened but did not come to pass, was brought under British sovereignty early in, and as a consequence of, the late world war.

They are well distributed with reference to sea power in the Mediterranean : Gibraltar near the entrance is 980 miles from Malta in the centre, and Malta in the centre is barely 1,000 miles from the nearest point of Cyprus, the easternmost of the three. The port of Larnaca in Cyprus is only about 260 miles from the Suez Canal. They change in size and character from west to east. Gibraltar is the typical fortress of the Empire, smallest of all its separate units. Malta is also a fortress, but by no means a fortress only. It is, like Bermuda, but on a larger scale and with a much longer history, at once a fortified and garrisoned naval station of the Empire and the home of a community with an active and independent life of its own. In Cyprus we come to a large historic island without the fortress element. All three were more or less on the fringe of the war and in contact with the war, but were never menaced by invasion and wholly secure.

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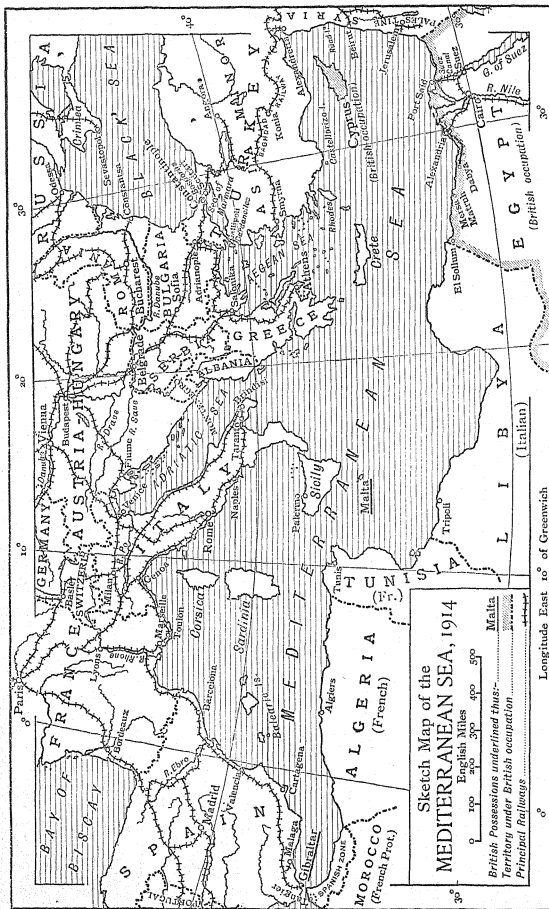
## SECTION I .

### GIBRALTAR

GIBRALTAR, with an area of not quite two square miles, had, when the census of 1911 was taken, a civil population of slightly over 19,000, but in 1914 the number was not as large, about 18,000. The small space available for living purposes makes it necessary to limit the number of residents ; a large proportion of the workers come from the outside in the morning and leave at nightfall, and during the war, though aliens were not and, in view of the great demand for labour, could not be excluded, as shown by the inconvenience caused by a strike of Spanish coal-heavers in August 1918, they were placed under special restrictions and their entry and exit was governed by a military control office. The 'Rock' is a fortress in every sense, the Governor makes the laws without the aid of any Legislative Council, and he is always a military officer of high rank, Commander of the Garrison as well as Governor of the Colony. When the war came the Governor was Sir Herbert Miles, G.C.B., C.V.O., who in the course of the war added to his honours the G.C.M.G. and G.B.E. When his five years expired he was succeeded in the first week of September 1918 by General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., D.S.O.

<sup>1</sup> Precautionary measures were taken on the 29th of July. On the 2nd of August a cable censorship was instituted, and when the news of the declaration of war had been received martial law was proclaimed almost as a matter of course. Notwithstanding, the emergency measures which the war called forth were embodied in ordinances, as in normal times. The first of these laws was a Bank-Note Ordinance, which authorized the issue of currency notes, a step which was at once effective in stopping a run on the banks. Other early war laws dealt with the importation of food-stuffs and with wholesale prices of food. The food question was somewhat

<sup>1</sup> The material for what follows was largely supplied by the kindness of Sir Bartle H. T. Frere, K.C., late Chief Justice of Gibraltar.



acute at first, for the Spanish Government prohibited the export of food-stuffs from Spain and prices in consequence rose in the Gibraltar market, but the case was met by instituting a food-control committee and importing supplies from Portugal. Gibraltar is entirely dependent for its food upon the outer world, and though throughout the war there was no serious shortage of provisions, the food question required careful and constant watching and the Government incurred heavy expenditure in paying subsidies in order to provide the poorer classes with cheap flour. In 1917 the loss on the sale of flour to bakers was £20,000, and in 1918, in which year good service was done by a volunteer food-supply committee, it was nearly £9,000. The declaration of war was promptly followed by naval patrol of the straits; aliens of military age were taken from passing ships and interned—another serious expense to the Government, and enemy ships were seized and handed over to the Prize Court, eleven such ships being brought in early in the war and some sixty enemy cargoes being dealt with as the war went on.

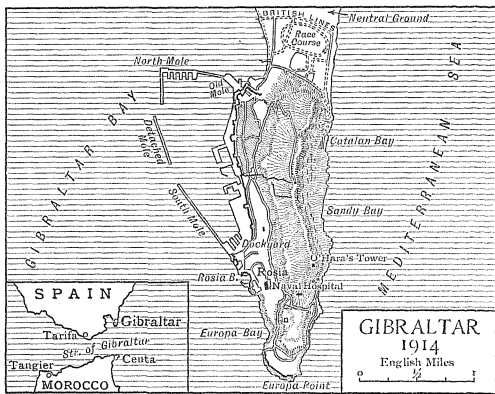
The number of Gibraltar men who joined the British armies was 76, some 5 or 6 of whom lost their lives. No official encouragement was given to enlistment for service at the front, nor were any passages paid by the Government, for the very good reason that the able-bodied men were wanted for work at Gibraltar. The prime value of Gibraltar to the Empire during the war was as a base for naval operations and a point of call for supplies, repairs, and the formation of convoys for the mercantile marine. Apart from the facilities provided for repair, rearmament, coaling, and provisioning of ships of war, both British and Allied, the advantages which were offered to and which were abundantly taken by merchant shipping were very great. For the effect of the war and the dangers involved in direct voyages to the Mediterranean ports and to the Atlantic ports of Morocco led to a great increase in transshipment at Gibraltar followed by coasting traffic. In the words of the Annual Report on the Colony for 1917, in which year it may be noted an American naval base was established there, Gibraltar was of inestimable value as a commercial coaling station and as a port of call for water and provisions. Statistics are eloquent as to the use made of the port. In the space of four years, not counting minor repairs, 350 men-

of-war were repaired and refitted and 80 merchant vessels were docked for repairs. The defensive armament work included the mounting of nearly 1,000 guns. The number of coalings in four years was 5,535 for men-of-war, and for merchant vessels 2,135. The coal supplied amounted to 1,655,000 tons. The Admiralty dockyard and naval establishments employed approximately 2,350 natives of Gibraltar, a very large proportion of the adult male element in the small community. The neutrality of Spain precluded any necessity for active defence on the land side, and the importance of the Rock as a marine centre made it obviously undesirable to divert any appreciable number of men from the work of the port, with the risk of thereby making it entirely dependent in case of emergency upon foreign labour. Thus in a place which of all others is most conspicuously a fortress, there was no recruiting office during the war and no Military Conscription Act. The civil population, however, were given an opening for co-operation in home defence by an ordinance which was passed in May 1915, and under which a small volunteer force was raised at Government expense to assist, should necessity arise, in the defence of the Colony and to release part of the garrison for fighting service. The Volunteers, we are told, did useful work.

In 1915, in addition to spending £8,000 on the keep of prisoners of war, the Gibraltar Government spent £2,250 in giving an aeroplane to the British Army. The public funds of the Colony also provided over £16,000 for the cost of the censorship service and in part payment of the expenses of the naval patrol and of the examination services of vessels in the Bay of Gibraltar. The general public subscribed £26,000 to War Charities, an average of £1. 7s. 0d. per head of the population, the subscribers coming from all classes. This was a large amount if the greatly increased cost of living is borne in mind, and also the fact that many received their incomes in English money and suffered by the heavy fall in the exchange value of the sovereign. Out of the total a sum of over £2,300 was raised for the Prince of Wales's Local Fund. There was a War Relief Fund and a Government House War Fund. The latter was of the same nature as Queen Mary's Needlework Guild but not so strictly confined to making garments. It supplied some 90,000 articles of clothing and accessories to Queen Mary's Guild, Belgian and Serbian Refugees, French



Red Cross, Hospital Ships, and the Military Hospital, as occasion required, and also large quantities of tobacco and fruit to men on the troopships and others. Belgian, French, Russian, and Italian relief funds all benefited by Gibraltar subscriptions, and a large number of other charities were supported in a minor degree. But the British Red Cross headed the list of beneficiaries by a long way, receiving £9,600 of the total £26,000.



Emery Walker Ltd. & Co.

With the exception of import duties levied on wine, spirits, beer, and tobacco, Gibraltar is one of the free ports of the Empire. During the war there was increase of taxation in various directions. The duty on tobacco was raised as from the 1st of June 1916; fees on passports were increased in 1917 and so were boat licences. In 1918 duties on wines and port and wharf dues were raised, war stamps were issued which brought in £2,160, and in September a new export duty was levied on coal. As the war went on the revenue grew, and while the last stage of the war brought depression to most of the British Colonies after an era of abnormal prosperity, the setback being usually due in great measure to shortage of shipping, in the case of Gibraltar 1918 was by far its best war

year, the revenue was greater than that of 1913 by 50 per cent.<sup>1</sup> and the increase in shipping was phenomenal. During the war, and because of the war, Gibraltar had in fact come into the very front rank among the great ports of the world, and according to Whitaker the tonnage of vessels which entered and cleared the port in 1918 exceeded that of any other port. The truth was that in 1918, to a greater extent than before, Gibraltar was used as a gathering place for very large convoys of merchant ships moving east or west. It will be seen below that Cyprus also flourished more the longer the war went on. In the case of Cyprus the reason was that everything that the island produced was in abnormal demand in neighbouring and easily accessible markets. In the case of Gibraltar all was accounted for by geographical position, sea power, import and export of coal, and the facilities which were provided and constantly extended at the port.

<sup>1</sup> There was a very great further increase of revenue in 1919, due to increased receipts from the duties on tobacco and on coals and from port dues, together with a larger return from investments.

## SECTION II.

### MALTA

THE Maltese islands, Malta, Gozo, and Comino, have a combined area equal to four-fifths of the Isle of Wight, and three-fourths of this area is in the main island of Malta. The total civil population at the beginning of the war was about 217,000, nearly a third of whom were concentrated in Valletta and the 'Three Cities', in other words in the neighbourhood of the great harbour, to which, coupled with its central position in the Mediterranean, Malta owes its rich historical record and its present-day importance. On the occasion of a lecture on 'Malta and Sea Power' given by Dr. Bartolo to the Royal Colonial Institute on the 28th of September 1920, Mr. L. S. Amery, then Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, spoke of Malta as a wonderful museum of the history of the past, a vital factor in world strategy, and not only a harbour and a fortress but also 'the home of an active, industrious, and keen population, a population which came into the Empire of their own free will and as allies in a great struggle'. It was as against France under the leadership of Napoleon that Malta joined the British Empire, but in the late war the French were friends and allies of Great Britain and Malta, from the beginning of the war the supreme naval command in the Mediterranean was allotted to France, and French ships of war were welcomed to the Grand Harbour which became for the time an advanced French naval base and from November 1917 the head-quarters of the Allied fleets in the Mediterranean.

In 1914 the Council of Government, which is the Legislative body and which since the war has been reconstituted on a broader basis, contained a majority of official over elected members. The Governor was, and always is, as in the case of Gibraltar, a soldier of high rank and distinction, Commander-in-Chief of the garrison—about 6,000 in number of all ranks before the war—as well as Governor of the Colony. When the war came, the Governor was General Sir Leslie Rundle, G.C.B., G.C.V.O., G.C.M.G., D.S.O., and on the expiration of

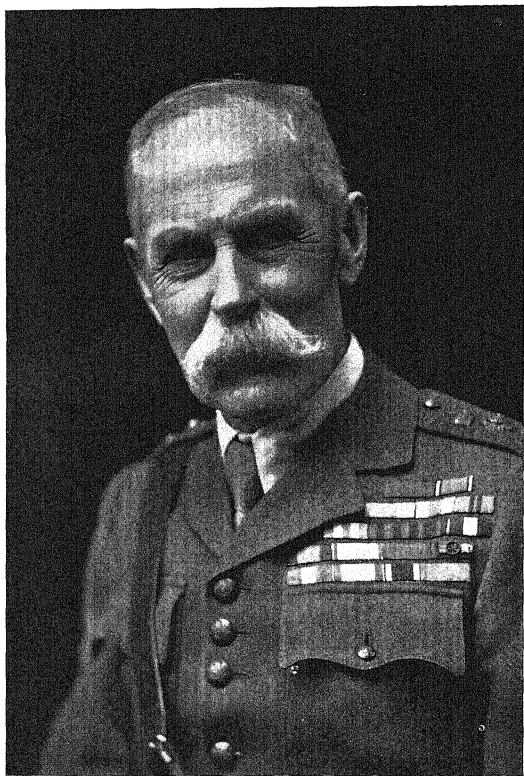
his term he was succeeded in February 1915 by Field-Marshal Lord Methuen, G.C.B., G.C.V.O., G.C.M.G., who held the appointment during the rest of the war.<sup>1</sup>

The pressure of population is great in Malta, and Maltese emigrants are to be found not only in Mediterranean lands but also much farther afield, as in Canada, Australia, and the United States. Thus it is almost impossible to form an estimate of the number of Maltese who fought in the war, for many were included in the Canadian and Australian forces, Queensland, for instance, supplying not a few, while Maltese who had become naturalized as French subjects in North Africa joined the French armies. From Malta itself various officers of the Maltese corps took service in British units and on their behalf the Legislature, in October 1915, passed a Local Volunteer Officers' War Allowance ordinance, under which, up to a maximum expenditure of £1,000 per annum for five years, such officers might be paid a colonial allowance at the rate of £50 per annum.

In January 1917 the names of Maltese officers at the time in British services outside Malta were given to the Council of Government. They numbered 95, over and above 13 civil surgeons who had served or were still serving on British hospital ships. Among them five brothers, sons of Mr. E. T. Agius, were officers in the London Regiment, two of them being awarded the Military Cross, while the family of Colonel Achille Samut, C.M.G., had given four to serve abroad. Among those who joined in Malta for overseas service there were 7 deaths. The distinctions which were won by Maltese officers during the war included 1 C.B., 1 C.M.G., 3 D.S.O.s, 8 M.C.s, a French gold medal and a Croix de Guerre, and an Italian bronze medal for valour. The mentions in dispatches included the eldest son of Mr. E. Bonavia, C.M.G., Captain Bonavia, M.D., R.A.M.C.

No Maltese unit served at the front in the fighting line, but Maltese troops took part in garrison duty and helped to set free for active service the British troops which normally form part of the garrison. These units were the King's Own Malta Regiment of Militia, with a war strength of 3,393 in all, the

<sup>1</sup> What follows has been mainly compiled from particulars supplied by the Malta Government, and more especially from Dr. Bruce's pamphlet, but has been also supplemented from other sources. The Editor is specially indebted to the Miss Stricklands for much information and help.

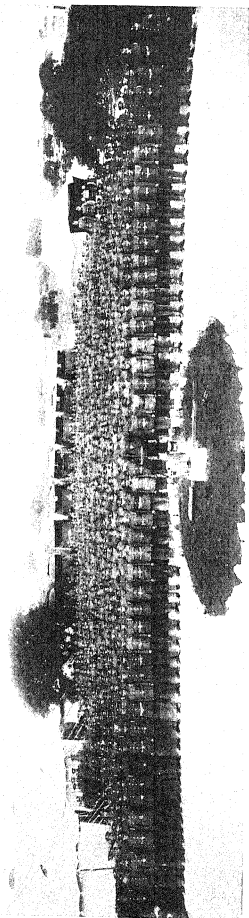


LORD METHUEN

IN

MALTESE LABOUR CORPS

The first 500 leaving for Salonika



Royal Malta Artillery, with a strength of 1,032 officers and men, and the Royal Engineer Militia, 136 strong. They were paid by and were under the authority of the Imperial Government, and, as has been well pointed out, formed politically a valuable link between the garrison and the civil population. In the last year of the war, early in March 1918, an attempt was made to raise an active service battalion of the Militia to be styled 'the 3rd Battalion of the King's Own Malta Regiment of Militia', and to be available for service anywhere overseas for the duration of the war. The terms offered, however, especially as regards separation allowances and pensions, were lower than the rates given to the British Army, and in consequence sufficient volunteers were not forthcoming, though shortly afterwards over 600 of the Militia responded to an invitation to enlist in the Army Service Corps on somewhat better conditions. The total number of Maltese from Malta who served in the army in any capacity during the war has been placed at slightly over 15,000. Conspicuous among them was a Maltese Labour Corps, over 7,000 in all. One battalion of them worked as stevedores at Gallipoli, where they were under shell fire daily for the six weeks prior to the evacuation; two battalions and two employment companies served at Salonika, there was a mining company in Italy, and one local company in Malta. The total casualties in the Labour Corps were about 300, including killed, died, and invalided. The deaths numbered 93 in the main Labour Corps, 5 in the mining company in Italy, and 20 in the employment companies. Another very useful body of men were some 1,500 Maltese employed in the motor transport work of the Army Service Corps, and in 1915 Maltese labour was utilized in producing hand grenades for the army in the Dardanelles. A number of Maltese served on British ships in the battle of Jutland and not a few lost their lives. Lives were also lost in mine sweeping near the coast of Malta. The total number of Maltese who served in connexion with the Royal Navy and naval establishments was rather over 15,900. It was claimed for the Malta Dockyard that it worked at higher pressure during the war than any other dockyard outside the United Kingdom, and of the above total, two-thirds were labourers at the Dockyard, Naval Ordnance Depot, and victualling yard. Nearly 2,400 were employed in coaling, there were nearly 1,300 on sea-going

service, 200 engaged in mine sweeping, and 500 in labour parties at bases away from Malta. The Royal Air Force employed 778 Maltese, and in all '31,739 men voluntarily served the Government in Malta and Overseas'. Submarine perils did not prevent 630 Maltese from taking engagements in the Mercantile Marine during the war against an average of under 200 in normal times. At the end of the war we are told that the discharges in Malta from war establishments exceeded 17,000 men.

But it is as a Military Hospital base that Malta stands out in the war. To the admirable work done by doctors and nurses, and to the support which that work received from voluntary agencies and philanthropic associations, and from the people of Malta, Lord Methuen has borne eloquent witness in his Foreword to Major G. R. Bruce's interesting account of the hospitals,<sup>1</sup> from which the following summary is taken :

Before the war the medical requirements of the garrison of Malta were amply provided for by 278 beds in four hospitals, under the charge of the R.A.M.C. The Navy had a fine hospital at Bighi on the southern side of the Grand Harbour. In the early months of the war there was no reason to expect that Malta would become a great receiving station for sick and wounded; the majority of the regular R.A.M.C. were taken away for duty elsewhere, being replaced by Territorials, the 1st City of London Field Ambulance, and the cases for treatment were, in number and kind, as in normal times. It was not till late in February 1915 that an inquiry from Egypt as to possible hospital accommodation elicited an immediate offer of 500 beds and, though no advantage was taken of the offer at the time, the Malta authorities, with wise prescience, for the Gallipoli enterprise was mounting on the horizon, prepared a scheme for 3,000 beds for sick and wounded in Malta and for 500 convalescents in Gozo. The first landing in Gallipoli was on the 25th of April 1915, on the 4th of May the first convoy of wounded, 600 in number, reached Malta, and by the end of May over 4,000 cases were being treated in eight hospitals, existing hospitals being expanded, barracks turned into hospitals, the naval hospital opened to military

<sup>1</sup> *Military Hospitals in Malta during the War.* A short account of their Inception and Development, by G. R. Bruce, M.A., M.D., &c., Specialist Sanitary Officer, Malta.



as well as naval patients, and the hospital of a religious community, the Blue Sisters' Hospital, being offered, with the services of the good sisters themselves, and gratefully accepted. Accommodation was further and speedily multiplied. By the end of June over 6,000 beds were available in the hospitals, and by the end of September, with the establishment of camp hospitals and the use of two Government schools for hospital purposes, the number of beds had risen to over 13,000. At this date the number of cases under treatment was over 10,000. Cases of permanent disability or requiring prolonged convalescence were sent on to England, while Malta devoted herself to the dangerously wounded or sick on the one hand, on the other to those whose recovery was assured within a reasonable time. At first the cases were nearly all cases of wounds, but, as the months went on, dysentery and enteric fever accounted for a larger proportion of casualties than shot and shell, and it was a great tribute to the efficacy of the precautions taken that no epidemic was imported into the crowded civil population of the island. Six months from the end of September, in March 1916, the number of beds had risen to fully 20,000, among new hospitals being one on Manoel Island in Marsamuscetto Harbour, accessible by a bridge from the main island and well suited for quarantine as well as for treatment of cases requiring isolation, another, a convalescent depot, as had been originally intended, on the high ground overlooking the port of Gozo. But Gozo is difficult of access, and camps for convalescents were mainly provided at St. Andrew's, 5 miles to the north-west of Valletta, and at Ghain Tuffieha and Melleha on either side of the northern end of Malta. The winter brought from Gallipoli, in lieu of cases of dysentery and enteric fever, sufferers from trench fever, frost bite, and rheumatism. One week at the beginning of December 1915 saw more than 6,000 sick and wounded landed, and towards the end of the year cases were coming from Salonika also. A greater crowd of patients than ever was looked for in the New Year, but the evacuation of Gallipoli was free from casualties, the early months of 1916 were at once healthy and comparatively quiet at Salonika, and the end of March found only 4,000 inmates in the Maltese hospitals, a fifth of the number of beds available.

The beds were now reduced from 20,000 to 12,000,\*some

of the hospitals were closed and the staff was cut down. In the third week of May the number of patients was only 3,000, but it had risen again to 5,000 by the end of June, as greater numbers of sick and wounded from Salonika came in. With July began a stream of malaria cases, the number of beds was again raised to over 15,000, 13,000 of which were occupied at the beginning of August, and eventually no fewer than 25,570 beds were equipped and about 25,000 were maintained till April 1917. The largest number of patients in all the hospitals and convalescent camps at any one time was 20,994 on the 23rd of October 1916, the sick being far more numerous than the wounded, and malaria heading the list of diseases. In April 1917 the sinking of hospital ships determined the British Government to concentrate the hospitals as far as possible at Salonika, the equipment and staff of five general hospitals was transferred from Malta and the number of new cases sent to the island was greatly diminished. At the beginning of May there were 14,537 under treatment, at the end of August only 5,465, and thenceforth there was no further pressure upon the Malta hospitals. In connexion with the Gallipoli campaign approximately 2,550 officers and 55,400 other ranks had been received and cared for, from the Salonika Army the numbers were 2,600 officers and nurses and 64,500 others. At no time had the number of beds fallen short of the number of patients, however fast the patients were pouring in. This testifies to the excellence of the organization, the foresight of those who were responsible on the spot, Lord Methuen and his professional advisers, the efficiency of the different departments, and the zealous co-operation of soldiers and civilians. Multiplied accommodation involved corresponding multiplication of staff and equipment. From the first, in anticipation of emergency, the precaution was taken of enrolling civilian doctors, enlisting the help of the local St. John's Ambulance Brigade, and forming a Ladies' Committee, but in April 1915 the R.A.M.C. in the island was still only on a peace footing of 9 medical officers, 14 nurses, and 220 rank and file, and wounded men poured in before further help had come from England. By the end of May, however, the personnel of the R.A.M.C. had risen to 82 medical officers, 219 nurses, and 798 rank and file, at the end of September to 240, 567, and 1,760 respectively, all under a Director of Medical Services, who arrived in July,

and in January 1916 to 334, 913, and 2,032, the medical and nursing services being now adequately staffed and fully organized. In the early months of 1916 reduction in the number of beds and patients was accompanied by reductions in the staff, and, when the second rush came, doctors and nurses were shorthanded, nor was medical aid as plentiful in England as it had been. Medical women, however, came out and proved most efficient, and in December 1916 the number of nurses had risen to a maximum of 625. Works, transport, equipment, supplies, all presented difficulties, which were met and surmounted. Royal Engineers, Army Service Corps, Army Ordnance Department rose to the emergency, and every advantage was taken of incidental help. Thus a prize ship provided a quantity of building and other material for new hospitals, and a Scottish Women's Serbian Unit, on their way to Serbia, during a fortnight's stay at Malta, gave nursing assistance at a most critical time when cases were coming in and nurses had not yet arrived from England. Malta gained greatly by being a point of call and easily visited, for among the visitors came medical men of long experience and high repute, who gave the benefit of their advice. On the spot, up to the end of July 1915 Colonel Sleman was Deputy Director of Medical Services; the island was then given a full Director in Surgeon-General Sir H. R. Whitehead, K.C.B., and he was succeeded in March 1916 by Surgeon-General Sir Thomas Yarr, K.C.M.G., C.B.

Valletta Hospital had once been the chief hospital of the Knights of St. John, and it was wholly in consonance with the history and tradition of Malta that the St. John's Ambulance Association should from the first have been prominent among voluntary agencies co-operating with the Government. A joint committee was formed of the Red Cross and the Order of St. John, and an Assistant Commissioner, specially sent out from England, took in hand the general organization of voluntary aid in the island. The sphere of the committee grew, as the hospitals grew and the number of sick, and connected with it was a Ladies' Committee—a combination of two such committees, under the chairmanship of Mrs. Radcliffe, O.B.E., whose work varied from meeting hospital ships and visiting hospitals to that of a Needlework Guild for supplementing hospital bandages and supplies.

Women's work at Malta during the war, at the Red Cross stores, at sewing depots, as V.A.D.s, and in many other ways, has been described as follows by one of the most energetic of the Maltese lady war workers :

' There had been no time to form a Queen Mary's Needlework Guild, but the ladies worked night and day, sewing parties were organized in every house, and even the school children on their holidays spent their mornings rolling bandages and making swabs. This was the summer of 1915 when the badly wounded were arriving from Gallipoli straight from the beach with only first-aid dressings which in some cases had not been changed for ten days. All work was then done voluntarily. Some ladies worked at the Red Cross Stores dealing with the consignments arriving from England, others spent their time sewing ; a hospital ship would arrive and demand two thousands of pillow cases, pyjamas, bandages, &c. Besides this, the hospitals at Mudros had to be supplied with a large number of mosquito nets. Some ladies assisted at every landing of the wounded. It is enough to say that over 100,000 men passed through the Island and that every one was met and welcomed on landing, given some refreshment, and supplied with cigarettes, matches, writing materials, and the latest paper. Sometimes the volunteers were on the quay from 9 a.m. till 9 p.m., at first in the blazing heat and then in the heavy rains and cold north-easterly winds. Others undertook the visiting of the hospitals, distributing the weekly rations of tobacco and arranging the flowers, &c. Some entertained the men in their homes, giving concerts and tea-parties and taking them for drives. And again, many ran the tea-rooms, working in the canteen in shifts from noon till late. Besides this quite a number signed on as regular V.A.D.s, doing four years' service in the hospitals and remaining on after the departure of those sent out from home.'

The Y.M.C.A., the Church Army, and the Scottish Church found ample field for their activities, and, among a multiplicity of beneficent efforts, three institutions in connexion with Gallipoli convalescents are specially mentioned in Major Bruce's account, tea-rooms opened in Sliema—a very central point for hospitals—by Mr. E. Bonavia, C.M.G., and Mrs. Bonavia, M.B.E., a Sailors' and Soldiers' Institute at the Valletta gymnasium, and the Australian Hall, a place of recreation built from funds sent from Australia through the Australian Red Cross, mindful of the care given to the Anzac sick and wounded in Malta. ' I am glad I came to Malta,' writes Lord Methuen in his Foreword, ' if it was only to help

the country in the organization of these hospitals.' He sums up the record very simply and truly as one 'of good work commenced in ample time which proved capable of meeting the heavy demands made', and he testifies that 'the people in Malta, ladies and gentlemen, came to my aid in a manner I shall never forget'.

The following funds were organized and supported at Malta during the war :

The National Relief Fund.

The Archbishop's Bread Fund.

Lady Methuen's Distressed Families Fund.

The Wounded Entertainment Fund.

The Ladies' Guild Fund for the Wounded.

The Daily Malta Chronicle Red Cross Fund.

The Daily Malta Chronicle Floral Fund, from the proceeds of which a wreath was placed on the coffin of every man or nurse who died at Malta.

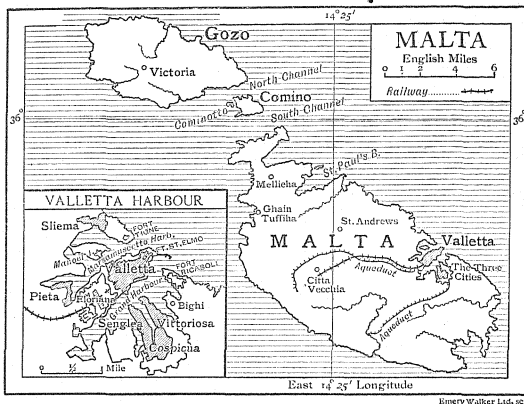
'Our Day' Fund.

The Malta Government, as has been stated, paid allowances to officers of the Maltese Corps who went to fight, and a sum of £1,000 per annum from the Maltese Treasury was promised towards the cost of censorship in the island. Gifts for the troops were exempted by special ordinance of 1915 from Customs duties, but otherwise no contributions were made from Government funds to war purposes and charities. Private subscriptions to the British Red Cross and St. John's Ambulance amounted to £18,562, but any estimate of what Malta gave in the war should include houses lent for hospital purposes and numberless gifts in kind. Maltese generosity, where means permitted, was illustrated by the case of the late Marchesa Coriuna Scicluna, O.B.E., who placed her fine palace at the disposal of the Government for convalescent soldiers, and contributed £100 monthly for the duration of the war. Her name stands high in the long list of Maltese ladies who gave themselves to patriotic service in the war, as do those of Mrs. Bonavia, M.B.E., and Mrs. Mifsud, M.B.E. ; while special mention should be made of the war work of Dr. A. Critien, M.B.E., chief Government Medical Officer, and of Dr. A. V. Bernard, Senior Medical Officer of Health.

The revenue and trade returns of the war years in Malta

do not show great fluctuations as the result of the war. No war taxes were imposed in the sense of moneys levied for the actual prosecution of the war, but, in consequence of the war and the depleted state of the Malta Exchequer, there was a great increase of taxation, especially in the last year of the war. The increases and new taxes included higher customs duties, ad valorem duties, port dues, and stamp duties, succession and donation duties, entertainment duties, excess profits duties, levied after the war but applied to excess profits made during the war, and post-office war-tax, together with additions to various minor taxes. The Maltese community is a poor one, and the industrial classes bear a high proportion to the total population. Dislocation of trade coupled with increased cost of living, higher taxes, restrictions on fishing and so forth, were acutely felt; before the war ended the price of bread and of various other necessities had trebled, and, as elsewhere from time to time, various articles were unobtainable; but, notwithstanding, the war discipline of the civil population was exceedingly good, and the many rules which were enforced for the security of the fortress were cheerfully and loyally accepted. The war establishments and the war hospitals gave very abundant employment, and after the hospitals had been reduced the workmen who had been employed in connexion with them found work in other war services. There was therefore no problem of unemployment as long as the war lasted. The feeding of the population was carefully watched by a Control Board, with subsidiary Boards such as a Flour Board and local committees in each district. 'Prices and distribution of all food-stuffs, whether imported or locally produced, [were] controlled at all stages.' In the last most straitened year of the war arrangements were made with the Governments of Egypt and Tunis for the supply of a certain amount of food-stuffs, and the Admiralty gave help in the transport. Thus by the exercise of great care any serious shortage of food was avoided, and fuel, too, which Malta cannot produce for herself in any sufficient amount, was sparingly provided. It cannot be said that the war brought wealth to Malta, because Malta does not possess the raw products, the abnormal demand for which enriched so many colonies. But it brought employment and good wages, and the fact that it was a naval centre ensured the island against being starved out. War legislation

ran much the same course as elsewhere, early provision being made for paper currency and for giving the Government full control of the import and distribution of food supplies and other prime necessities of life. The story is in short one of



a well-ordered and responsive community, which had its hands full with war work of one kind and another, centrally placed, not immune from danger of air-raids and bombardment by submarines, but entirely secure, because of the sea-power of the Empire with which Malta has cast in her lot.

## SECTION III

### CYPRUS

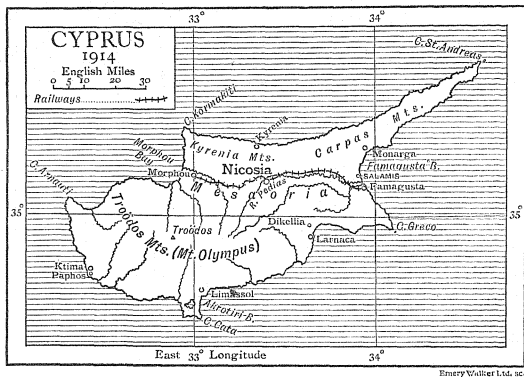
CYPRUS in area is three-quarters of the size of Jamaica. Its greatest length—from south-west to north-east—is 140 miles ; its greatest breadth—from north to south—is about 60. The long arm of the Carpas peninsula heads directly for the Bay of Alexandretta and, had an expeditionary force been landed at that point, the island would presumably have played an important part in the war as a military base. On the north it is at the nearest point between 40 and 50 miles from the Asiatic coast, on the east just under 70. Larnaca is 108 miles from Beirut, 262 from Port Said, and 1,117 from Valletta.

The population when the war came was under 300,000, at the census of 1911 274,000, of whom rather over one-fifth were Moslems, the great majority being of Greek race. The Legislative Council contained a majority of elected members. When the war began the High Commissioner was Sir Hamilton Goold Adams, G.C.M.G., C.B., whose previous service had been all in South Africa, and when he was appointed Governor of Queensland, his successor in December 1914 was Sir John Clauson, K.C.M.G., C.V.O., who had been Chief Secretary of Cyprus and subsequently of Malta and who died shortly after the war ended, on the last day of 1918.

The garrison of the island in August 1914 was only a handful from the Egyptian Command, under 150 in all, one company of infantry and a few details of the Army Service and Army Medical Corps. There was a military police in the island with a strength of over 700, and including mounted police, who did good-service as patrols during the war. Martial law was proclaimed on the 5th of August 1914 and under martial law the island remained throughout the war, the usual indemnity law being passed by the Legislature in 1919. No inconvenience was thereby caused to the civil and industrial life of the community, and the existence of martial law made it unnecessary to pass the manifold war enactments which kept the local legislatures busy in most colonies. Nor did the annexation of the island upon the entry of Turkey into the war cause any



trouble. On the contrary, it simplified the position and put an end to the complications arising from occupation without sovereignty. In the words of the Order in Council of the 5th of November 1914, which declared the annexation, Cyprus was annexed 'in order that proper provision may be made for the government and protection of the said island'. Simultaneous with the Order in Council was a proclamation declaring the status of the Moslem inhabitants which was superseded by a later proclamation of the 3rd of March 1915. The effect was to declare all Ottoman subjects resident in Cyprus to be



British subjects, but to give them the option of retaining their Ottoman nationality and leaving the island. Only in a very few special cases was the option exercised; the body of Moslems in Cyprus, as elsewhere in the British Empire, showed no desire to follow the lead of Turkey, and were well content with British citizenship. But it would have been a different story had the conditional offer of Cyprus to Greece, which was made in 1915, been accepted.

The following account of the part played by the island and its people in the war was forwarded by the Cyprus Government in June 1919.

'On the entry of the Ottoman Empire into the war, Cyprus, which hitherto had been occupied and administered by Great

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Britain under the convention of 4th June, 1878, between Queen Victoria and the Sultan, was formally annexed, by Order in Council dated 5th November 1914, to form part of His Majesty's Dominions. Its geographical situation made Cyprus a convenient centre from which the Allied Forces in the near and middle East could draw supplies, and from time to time various commissions were sent from the Expeditionary Forces in Egypt and Salonika to visit the island and to make arrangements for the purchase and shipment of any supplies that might be available, such as grain (barley, oats, and wheat), potatoes, carobs and chopped straw. Considerable quantities of other food-stuffs such as eggs, vegetables, and fruit were also obtained. The following table gives particulars of some of the more important food-stuffs exported for the use of the Expeditionary Forces :

	<i>Quantity.</i>
Oats . . . . .	1,388 tons
Barley . . . . .	12,725 „
Wheat . . . . .	5,919 „
Onions . . . . .	1,392 „
Chopped straw . . . . .	1,589 „
Vinegar . . . . .	5,054 gallons
Bran . . . . .	147 tons
Potatoes . . . . .	15,974 „
Carobs . . . . .	38,000 „
Raisins . . . . .	4,711 „
Goats . . . . .	40,000
Eggs . . . . .	800,000

‘In addition to the export to Egypt and Salonika of the commodities above enumerated, Cyprus contributed largely to the provisioning of the garrison and population of the islands of Ruad and Castellorizo which were in French occupation ; while throughout the war the various bodies of troops stationed in the island, as well as the prisoners of war, who were accommodated at Famagusta in considerable numbers, were maintained entirely from local resources.

‘The supply of timber and fuel to the Army in Egypt, the whole of whose requirements in this respect had to be met by importation from abroad, was a service for which Cyprus was well adapted. During the year 1916 upwards of 2,000 tons of fuel were exported to Egypt as a free gift for the requirements of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force. This gift was followed by a request from the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief for a regular supply of wood fuel from the island, and arrangements were made for the shipment from Famagusta, in ships sent from Egypt for the purpose, of periodical consignments of timber and fuel on repayment. Up to the 31st of March 1919, approximately 75,000 tons of fuel costing about £80,000 were so supplied. In addition about

200,000 cubic feet of sawn timber of a value of £23,000, 410,000 pickets valued at £7,000, and 36,000 telegraph poles valued at £13,000 were also supplied.

Between 1915 and the early part of 1918 a considerable number of animals were purchased and shipped to Egypt and Salonika for transport purposes. The following table gives particulars of the number and kind of animals shipped during each of the years in question :

	<i>Mules.</i>	<i>Donkeys.</i>	<i>Horses.</i>
1915 . . .	400	—	—
1916 . . .	2,750	1,200	140
1917 . . .	393	1,676	—
1918 . . .	—	373	—
Total . .	3,543	3,249	140 <sup>1</sup>

An urgent need of the British force in Salonika, where, owing to the mountainous nature of the country and the scarcity and poor quality of Macedonian roads, the Army had to rely to a great extent on pack transport, was the supply of a large body of muleteers. To meet this need proposals were made by the military authorities in May 1916 for the voluntary enlistment in Cyprus of as many muleteers as could be obtained. The necessary arrangements were quickly made, and recruiting was immediately started with satisfactory results, the rates of pay proving very attractive to the Cypriot peasants and villagers, of whom upwards of 13,000 were enlisted. The removal of this large number of able-bodied men, all of whom were between the ages of 18 and 41, from an island whose male population is under 150,000, naturally resulted in a shortage of labour at a time when the resources of the island were being strained to the utmost for the production of food-stuffs and other commodities to supply the needs of the Army. In spite, however, of this drain it was found possible gradually to increase the production of cereals and other food-stuffs, a result which was obtained by liberal grants of seed corn to farmers and the offer in advance of good prices for potatoes. At the same time restrictions were imposed on the cultivation of non-essential products, and the emigration of men of military age was prohibited.

The great shortage of labour was specially felt by those government departments which were engaged in the provision and transport of supplies for the Army. In the case of the Railway Department this difficulty was accentuated by the shortage of rolling-stock which consisted of only 9 locomotives and 72 wagons. As this number had proved barely sufficient for the ordinary requirements of the island in normal times, the transport of very large quantities of supplies for the

<sup>1</sup> 40,000 goats were also exported as stated in the table on p. 22.

military authorities in addition to the ordinary goods traffic imposed a very severe strain on the resources of the railway, which were taxed to the uttermost, especially in view of the difficulties involved in keeping the rolling-stock in running order, as it was practically impossible to obtain renewals or spare parts from the outside world. In the Forest Department the shortage of man power was even more severely felt, as the provision of timber and fuel for the Egyptian Expeditionary Force necessitated the undertaking of many additional works, including the provision and equipment of three new saw-mills, the construction of 28 miles of road, and the opening up of 102 miles of forest paths for the transport of the timber from the places where it was felled to the railway or the sea. The transport was effected by means of motor lorries, carts, camels, mules, donkeys, and by native boats, some of which were sunk in encounters with submarines. A considerable amount of additional work was thrown upon the Public Works Department in view of the constant damages to roads and culverts caused by heavy military transport lorries and carts engaged in transporting supplies to the railway and the sea over roads which had not been constructed for the passage of heavy vehicles. In consequence of this heavy traffic, the majority of the culverts on such roads had to be rebuilt, the bridges strengthened, and the surfaces relaid. In addition the construction of some new roads was necessary. The expenditure on roads for military requirements amounted to £7,500. Such were some of the difficulties which faced those responsible for meeting the demands which were made on the resources of the island and which were surmounted only by making the utmost use of the labour available.

'The part played by Cyprus as a source of supply to the Armies having been indicated, a short account of services which the island was able to render in other directions must now be given. Full use was made of the island as a place of detention for prisoners of war. A camp was established at Famagusta in October 1916, capable of accommodating 5,400 prisoners, and during this and the following years 10,000 prisoners of war passed through it. These, as has already been noted, as well as the troops employed in guarding them, were provisioned entirely from the local resources of the island.

'In November 1916 a camp was opened at Monarga, 12 miles north of Famagusta, for the training of Armenian corps under French officers for service in Palestine. Large numbers of men were trained in this camp, which was not broken up until February 1919 when the last detachment left the island.

'Cyprus proved a welcome asylum to persons compelled to flee from Syria, Asia Minor, and other parts of the Ottoman dominions on the outbreak of war, and arrangements to house and feed them and, when possible, to find work for them,

were made by a special committee appointed for the purpose. A large proportion of the refugees, however, were women, children, and old men, unaccustomed to hard manual work. A school was opened at Larnaca, supported by funds received from abroad, and this has been well attended by the many refugee children temporarily quartered in that town. Among the refugees special mention may be made of the Jews who were transferred to Cyprus from various parts of the Ottoman dominions. At the present moment<sup>1</sup> there are on the relief roster 291 refugees of this nationality. In November 1917, owing to a threatened aerial bombardment by the Turks of the island of Ruad, which had been occupied by a French garrison, arrangements were made for the reception in Cyprus of the old men, women, and children from that island, of whom 761 were landed and housed in the quarantine station at Dikellia near Larnaca, the camp being under the supervision and control of French officers appointed by the Governor of Ruad. Work was found in the vicinity for all who were capable of working. At the end of 1918, after the signing of the armistice, all these refugees were able to return to Ruad.

Convalescent depots were established early in the war at Limasol and on Mount Troödos, capable of accommodating 500 convalescents at a time, each of whom was given a fortnight's stay in the hills. These camps were occupied during the summers of 1915 and 1916 by convalescents from Egypt and elsewhere.

Subscriptions to the British Red Cross Society were freely given by all classes of the community, without distinction of race or creed, from the earliest days of the war; the Commissioner in each district becoming the local Hon. Treasurer of the fund. In this way a sum of £8,337 was collected. A sum of £400 was also collected in 1915 for the Belgian Relief Fund, and the purchase of War Loan Stock and National War Bonds was encouraged and facilitated by the Government and a branch of the National War Savings Association was founded, under a local Hon. Secretary.<sup>2</sup> A considerable number of Cypriots, about 100 in all, mostly members of the Government service, were accepted for duty as interpreters with the Armies in the near East and in camps for prisoners of war in India and Egypt.

In addition to their regular duties connected with the preservation of order and the detection of crime, much additional work fell to the lot of the Cyprus Military Police, a force consisting of 26 officers and 763 non-commissioned officers and men, including about 420 Moslems. The protection of the island against espionage, and the patrol of its long coast-line

<sup>1</sup> June 1919.

<sup>2</sup> In 1916-17 the Cyprus Government invested £20,000 in War Loan.

to guard against communication with the enemy coast (in many places not more than 40 miles distant), and against the establishment of depots for enemy submarines, constituted a laborious task which was efficiently carried out.

'In conclusion it should be added that all classes of the community combined in a cheerful and resolute manner to assist the Government of the island by willingly meeting the many demands made on them and by readily submitting to the restrictions imposed by the various regulations which military exigencies necessitated.'

To Cyprus, as to all other parts of the world, the war brought high prices and great increase in the cost of living, Government servants and others on fixed salaries being of necessity most affected. Otherwise this island profited greatly by the war. The first effects of the crisis were reflected, though to no striking extent, in lower revenue and trade returns, there was an initial moratorium, and it was found necessary to issue currency notes to meet the shortage of gold. There were enemy ships and subjects to be dealt with, there was prohibition of export of food-stuffs, regulation of prices and the like. But after the first few months revenue and trade prospered amazingly, and the island Treasury was well able to meet any special calls made upon it by reason of the war, such as appropriation for relief of refugees in Cyprus and distressed Cypriotes outside the island amounting in all to nearly £35,000, payment of passages for men going to the front, and expenditure on roads and works. The financial year 1915-16 showed a record revenue with a great increase in the value both of imports and of exports, and each succeeding year told a similar tale. Mining, to a limited extent, prospered as well as agriculture, and there was no falling off in the last months of the war. The revenue for 1918-19 was £610,000, as against £342,000 in the financial year which preceded the war.

The effect of the war upon Cyprus may be summed up in the words of the Annual Report for 1916-17: 'It is probably true to say that at no time for many hundred years has there been so great a demand as at present for the various products of Cyprus.'

PART II  
EGYPT AND PALESTINE

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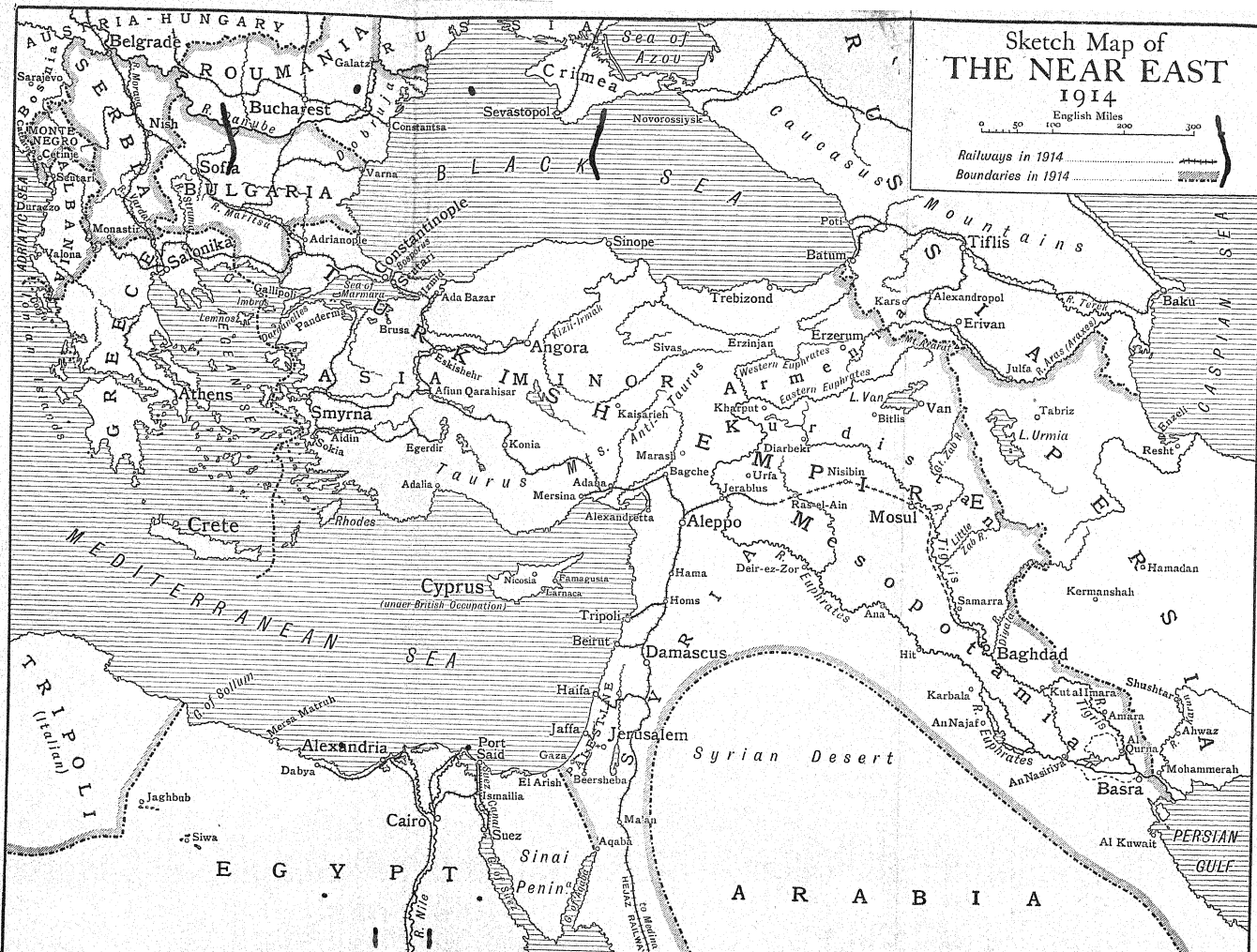
# Sketch Map of THE NEAR EAST

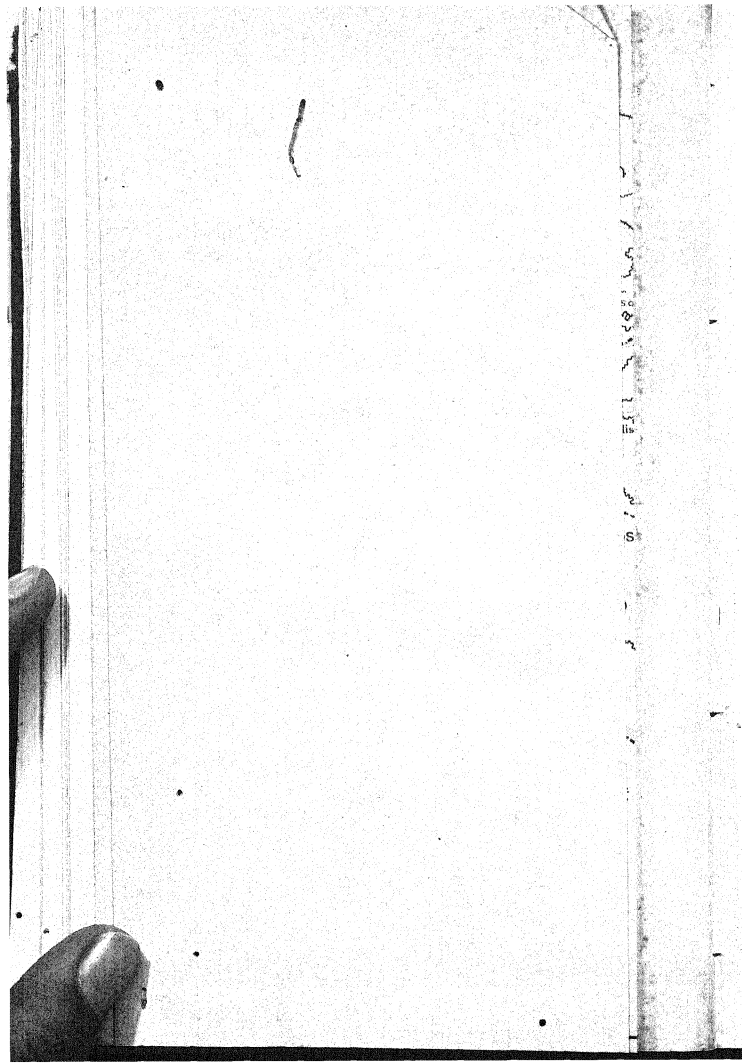
1914

English Miles  
0 50 100 200 300

Railways in 1914

Boundaries in 1914





## SECTION I

### EGYPT DURING THE WAR

*By the Editor*

EGYPT extends to the south as far as 22° North Latitude, where the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan begins, with Halfa forming its northernmost point. The area of Egypt is about 350,000 square miles, most of it desert, the area of the Nile valley and delta being only from 12,000 to 13,000 square miles. The Sinai Peninsula is included in Egypt, the eastern boundary, as finally laid down in 1906, running from Rafah on the Mediterranean to the head of the Gulf of Aqaba. On the western side of Egypt is the Libyan desert. On the sea, on this side, El Sollum was the westernmost Egyptian station. Inland the westernmost oasis within or on the Egyptian frontier was Siwa, where before the war the Senussi chief had established his head-quarters. The population of Egypt largely increased after the British occupation. A census of 1907 returned the numbers at 11½ millions, and of 1917 at 12¾. Over 90 per cent. were Moslems, and not a tenth of the population could read and write.

In August 1914 Egypt was part of the Ottoman Empire, under the suzerainty of the Sultan of Turkey, paying an annual tribute to Turkey of about £675,000, and bound over not to maintain an army in peace time of more than 18,000 men. But the Sultan had recognized the Khedive of Egypt as an hereditary though vassal sovereign, and the administration was in substance independent of Turkey. The extravagance and misgovernment of a former Khedive, Ismail, had reduced the country to bankruptcy, placing it at the mercy of creditor European nations, and British military occupation, supervening upon the rising headed by Arabi Pasha, had resulted in what has been styled the 'veiled Protectorate' of Great Britain, represented at Cairo by a British Agent and Consul-General.

From January 1884 to April 1907, Lord Cromer was the British representative and, in the face of almost insurmountable

difficulties and international complications, regenerated the land and the people. He was succeeded by Sir Eldon Gorst and, when the latter died in July 1911, Lord Kitchener was appointed in his place. Lord Kitchener was holding the appointment when the war came and his services were requisitioned for the War Office. The Khedive Ismail had been deposed in 1879, prior to the British occupation, being replaced by his son Tewfik. The latter co-operated well in the new order, but it was not so with his successor, Abbas Hilmi, who, as a young man, became Khedive upon his father Tewfik's death in 1892. He gave Lord Cromer no little trouble, and, though relations became outwardly more amicable, the political condition of Egypt in the years preceding the war made Lord Kitchener's strong will, intimate knowledge of Egyptian conditions, and great prestige a most valuable asset. Egypt was in form a constitutional monarchy. There were responsible ministers and, by a revision of the constitution in 1913, a Legislative Assembly, mainly elective, but more a deliberative and advisory than a legislative body. Even before Lord Cromer left Nationalist feeling was on the increase, with a demand for complete self-government. What came to pass in Egypt has been paralleled in other countries which have passed under British control. Relief from oppression breeds the fullest content until a generation arises not familiar with the evil past, taught under British tutelage to expect and aspire to far more than would have been dreamed of in former days, and well aware of British regard for freedom of thought and speech. Such was the testimony of Lord Milner's Commission in 1920. 'With the removal of that fear of oppression which in old days had made Egyptians acquiescent and submissive, new impulses and ambitions were inevitably aroused. The Egyptians of 1920, whether townsmen or peasants, are different people from those of 1910, and very different indeed from the Egyptians of 1890.'<sup>1</sup> The merits of British administration and its tolerance are almost as responsible as its shortcomings and mistakes for restlessness in the minds of the peoples whom Great Britain has taken in charge. Moreover, it was the openly avowed object of the British Government and its representatives to train the Egyptians to govern themselves.

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Special Mission to Egypt*, Cmd. 1131, 1921, Egypt No. 1, 1921.

On the outbreak of the war Egypt, being part of the Turkish Empire, was in theory neutral ground, but the necessities of the case made it almost immediately for all practical purposes an Allied country. The Suez Canal was vital to Great Britain and her Allies, and German ships could not be left immune in Egyptian ports. The subsequent entry of Turkey into the war had the advantage of clearing up the position and putting an end to awkward technicalities. Great Britain and Turkey were formally at war on the 5th of November 1914, and in a few weeks' time, on the 18th of December, a proclamation was issued at Cairo in the following terms:

'His Britannic Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs gives notice that, in view of the state of war arising out of the action of Turkey, Egypt is placed under the Protection of His Majesty and will henceforth constitute a British Protectorate. The Suzerainty of Turkey over Egypt is thus terminated, and His Majesty's Government will adopt all measures necessary for the defence of Egypt, and protect its inhabitants and interests.'

On the next day, the 19th, there was a second proclamation. It happened that on the outbreak of the war with Germany both of the leading figures in Egypt were out of the country, Lord Kitchener was on leave in England and the Khedive was at Constantinople. The proclamation ran:

'His Britannic Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs gives notice that, in view of the action of His Highness Abbas Hilmi Pasha, lately Khedive of Egypt, who has adhered to the King's enemies, His Majesty's Government have seen fit to depose him from the Khedivate, and that high dignity has been offered, with the title of Sultan of Egypt, to His Highness Prince Hussein Kamel Pasha, eldest living Prince of the family of Mohammed Ali, and has been accepted by him.'

Thus Egypt was severed from the Turkish dominions, the severance being emphasized by the substitution of the title of Sultan for the inferior term Khedive or prince, and for the time was brought more directly within the circle of the British Empire. By the Treaty of Sèvres, signed in 1920, Turkey renounced 'all rights and title in or over Egypt' and the renunciation was embodied in the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923.

The proclamation of the 19th of December 1914 was accompanied, on the same day, by a communication to the new Sultan signed by Mr., now Sir Milne, Cheetham, who was

acting as British Agent and Consul-General in the absence of Lord Kitchener. It set forth the grounds upon which the changes had been made, the open hostility of Turkey, and the 'ample evidence' that ever since the outbreak of war with Germany His Highness Abbas Hilmi Pasha, late Khedive of Egypt, has definitely thrown in his lot with the King's enemies'. In consequence, the rights over Egypt both of the Sultan of Turkey and of the late Khedive were forfeit to His Majesty. The British Government, the letter continued, had already, through the General Officer in Command of the British forces in Egypt, accepted exclusive responsibility for the defence of Egypt during the war. It remained to lay down the future form of government of the country freed from all rights which had previously been enjoyed or claimed by the Ottoman Government. Of those rights and others already exercised the British Government regarded themselves 'as trustees for the inhabitants of Egypt', and held that they could best fulfil their responsibilities 'by the formal declaration of a British Protectorate, and by the Government of the country under such Protectorate by a Prince of the Khedivial family'. Great Britain would be responsible for the defence of Egypt against foreign aggression from any quarter, and would be the medium of the foreign relations of Egypt. It was explicitly repeated that the Capitulations, the special extraterritorial rights in Egypt enjoyed by European Powers, which had been such a constant obstacle in the way of reform, were 'no longer in harmony with the development of the country', but their revision must await the end of the war. In internal administration the British Government not only intended to remain faithful to its past policy and 'in such measure as the degree of enlightenment of public opinion may permit, to associate the governed in the task of Government', but were convinced 'that the clearer definition of Great Britain's position in the country will accelerate progress towards self-government'.

Abbas Hilmi had been educated in Austria and was likely to have predilections in favour of the Central Powers. In any case he had proved himself to be a mischievous intriguer, constantly anti-British, and both Egypt and Great Britain were well rid of him. The new Sultan, Prince Hussein, was his uncle, brother of the Khedive Tewfik and second son of





SIR JOHN MAXWELL



Ismail. He was well chosen, for he co-operated loyally with the British authorities, was a keen agriculturist, and a good friend to the peasantry. It was a great misfortune when he died in October 1917. His successor as Sultan was his brother Ahmed Fuad, youngest son of Ismail, who had been brought up in Italy, and who, in March 1922, was proclaimed King of Egypt. In August 1914 the President of the Council of Ministers and Prime Minister of Egypt was Rushdi Pasha, who, when the war came, accepted the situation as inevitably involving Egypt on the side of Great Britain. Prince Hussein, on becoming Sultan, invited him to remain in office, and he continued to be Prime Minister throughout the war.

We must now go back to the very beginning of the war, before the British Protectorate came into being. In *Modern Egypt*<sup>1</sup> Lord Cromer described the difficulties with which the English in Egypt and he himself in particular had to contend, in the words, 'one alien race, the English, have had to control and guide a second alien race, the Turks, in the government of a third race, the Egyptians'. The complications when war was imminent and, after it came, until Turkey was a declared enemy, and, after Turkey was a declared enemy, until the Turkish suzerainty was formally cancelled and British Protectorate proclaimed, were extraordinary to a degree. The position was undefinable and undefined. The recognized ruler of the country was absent, the country was for two days neutral both in theory and in fact, then neutral in theory, belligerent in fact, then openly belligerent against the Suzerain Power but with the absent ruler on the side of the Suzerain Power and not yet deposed, for it will be borne in mind that, though Great Britain and Turkey went to war on the 5th of November, it was not until the 18th and 19th of December respectively that the British Protectorate was proclaimed and followed by the deposition of Abbas Hilmi. The Capitulations were in force, all the time, and side by side with the civil Government and the British political representative was the General Officer commanding the British garrison in Egypt, who, by the logic of facts, was placed in the forefront of the tangled position. Fortunately the General, Sir John Maxwell, was an able and understanding man, who had been through former Egyptian and Nile campaigns, and knew Egypt well. He had already held

<sup>1</sup> 1908 edition, Introduction, p. 5.

the command to which he returned in September 1914 from 1908 to 1912.

There had been a very low Nile in 1913 and the crisis found Egypt by no means on the flood-tide of prosperity. Moreover, it came at the time when the cotton crop was about to be gathered, and the war had a disastrous effect upon the cotton market. The price of cotton fell by one-third, the volume of trade was greatly reduced, there was commercial stagnation and consequent unemployment. In the absence of the Khedive the Prime Minister acted as regent and signed decrees in the Khedive's name. The first, dated the 2nd of August, made the notes of the National Bank of Egypt legal tender, and relieved the bank for the time being from the obligation of redeeming them in gold. On the same day the export of food-stuffs was prohibited, and on the 4th of August a partial moratorium was proclaimed, which was made general on the 9th, except in the case of deposits at the banks. On the 3rd of August a declaration of the neutrality of Egypt in the wars which had come to pass between Germany and Russia on the one hand, and Austria and Serbia on the other, had been embodied in instructions applying to Egyptian ports and subjects, over and above the regulations already prescribed by treaty for the Suez Canal in the case of war. But the neutrality was shortlived, for, two days later, on the 5th of August, the Regent and his colleagues drew up a proclamation which recited that, in view of the war between Great Britain and Germany and the presence in Egypt of the British Army of Occupation, which exposed Egypt to attack from the enemies of Great Britain, measures must be taken for the defence of Egypt, and the measures which were prescribed made Egypt, in effect, a belligerent country on the side of Great Britain. On the 13th of August the terms used with reference to Germany were applied to Austria also. Various steps were taken, and a large number of notifications were issued, to relieve the economic situation and meet the emergency. Commissions were appointed to fix the maximum prices of necessities, advances to cotton cultivators unable to sell their cotton were guaranteed by the Government, the cotton grown by small cultivators was bought up by the Government, the area to be cultivated in cotton in 1915 was limited in order at once to keep up the price of cotton by

limiting the quantity and to encourage the growth of additional food-stuffs, arrangements were made whereby gold ornaments offered in payment of taxes should be valued by the Government and the owners not defrauded, and the sale of newspapers was regulated.

Up to the end of October the civil Government held the field, but war with Turkey was imminent, and on the 2nd of November two proclamations were issued, signed by Sir John Maxwell as commanding the British forces in Egypt. The first stated that he had been directed by the British Government 'to assume military control of Egypt in order to secure its protection. The country is therefore placed under martial law from this date'. The second reassured the Egyptians by explaining that the powers to be exercised by the military authorities under martial law were intended to supplement and not to supersede the civil administration, that there would be no interference with the public as long as the public was on good behaviour. On the 6th the General issued a third proclamation, intimating that as from the 5th Great Britain was at war with Turkey, that Great Britain was fighting at once to protect the rights and liberties of Egypt which had been originally won on the battle-field by Mehemet Ali, and to secure the maintenance of the peace and prosperity which the British occupation had brought to Egypt, but that, recognizing the veneration felt by the Mohammedans of Egypt for the Sultan of Turkey in his religious capacity, 'Great Britain takes upon herself the sole burden of the present war without calling upon the Egyptian people for aid therein'. That this was a rash promise the sequel was to show. A copy of the proclamation was formally communicated by Mr. Cheetham to the Egyptian Prime Minister in a short note, which pointed out that the General took entire responsibility during the war for all measures necessary for or relating to the defence of Egypt, 'while the Egyptian Ministers retain the direction of the purely civil services of their respective departments'. Thus, with martial law in force, Egypt came under two authorities, exercising their functions side by side; nor was the position altered after the British Protectorate had been proclaimed and Prince Hussein became Sultan. On the one hand there was the Sultan with his Cabinet and the British political representative. The latter was now

styled, in virtue of the Protectorate, High Commissioner, and the first High Commissioner, who reached Egypt towards the end of December, 1914, was Sir Henry Macmahon, a distinguished official from India but without previous experience of Egypt. At the beginning of 1917 he was replaced by Sir Reginald Wingate, who, as Governor-General of the Sudan and Sirdar or Commander-in-Chief of the Egyptian Army, had won a deservedly high reputation. On the other hand, there was the General in command of the British Army in Egypt, responsible for all measures relating to the defence of Egypt. His proclamations had the force of law, and a study of them shows how wide was the exercise of his powers. Trading with the enemy, sale of alcohol, management of the deposed Khedive's estates, establishment of special courts to replace the German and Austrian consular courts, were among the matters which Sir John Maxwell regulated. As the war went on, and Egypt became to an evergrowing extent a military base, so, of necessity, the military authority grew at the expense of the civil and, in the words of the official review of the years 1914-19, 'Egypt, though not the scene of active operations, passed for many purposes almost completely under military administration'.<sup>1</sup>

Egypt was well handled in 1914, and it needed it. It was full of inflammable material. The foreign element in the population was most cosmopolitan and sheltered, as far as Europeans were concerned, by the Capitulations. The original basis of the position taken up by or rather for Egypt in the war was that the British occupation of Egypt made her liable to attack by the enemies of Great Britain, and that therefore such measures must be taken as would ensure her against attack. But on this hypothesis, and until martial law was proclaimed, it was difficult at once and summarily to deal with German and Austrian residents, diplomats, consuls, traders, even officials of the Egyptian Government. It was a month before the country, technically a neutral country, was rid of the German and Austrian political representatives, and much longer before Germans and Austrians generally were deported or interned. There was ample opportunity, without overt attack, for German intrigue, already busily at work before the war, and for the use of German money. There were, again, the rights

<sup>1</sup> Egypt No. 1, 1920, Cmd. 957, p. 58.

and susceptibilities of bona fide neutrals to be respected. Among non-Europeans the extreme Nationalists, fostered by Abbas Hilmi, were already violently anti-British before the war and looked on the war as a possible means to their ends. There was a strong Turkish or mixed Turkish element among the upper classes, naturally on the side of Turkey when Turkey came into the war, and the entry of Turkey brought with it an appeal to Moslems generally, a call from the Sultan of Turkey, not as the Sultan of Turkey but as the spiritual head of the Mohammedan world. The danger centres were in the cities among the educated and half-educated, the lawyers and students or, at the other extreme, among the lawless marauding Bedouin of the desert. The peasantry of the settled countryside, on the other hand, knew what British occupation had meant to them, and were not concerned to upset it.

The Egyptian Army, as has been said, had a peace strength of not more than 18,000 men. It was largely employed in the Sudan, for the safe-keeping of which it was responsible. The British garrison, which in August 1914 numbered about 6,000 of all ranks, was stationed in Egypt, with the exception of one small detachment at Khartoum. When the war began the British troops of the Line were badly needed nearer home.<sup>1</sup> They were replaced by others. The first to come, in September, were units of the Indian Expeditionary Force, and to Indian soldiers in the main was entrusted the safe keeping of the Suez Canal. Before September was out the East Lancashire (Territorial) Division and a brigade of Yeomanry arrived, and by the middle of December all the first Australian and New Zealand Expeditionary Force had come in from the south. These white troops were in Egypt not only to protect Egypt but also, especially in the case of the Anzacs, to complete their military training, and, as the year 1914 drew to an end, Egypt had fully entered on the first phase of its partnership in the war, that of becoming a military base, a camping and training ground, constantly sending on units when trained and receiving others to be trained, already playing an important part in the war but as yet a passive more than an active part, although the Egyptian administration from first to last gave of its best in staff and material for the benefit of the soldiers from overseas.

<sup>1</sup> Of these returned Regulars one battalion was in the 7th Division at Xpres, the majority were in the 8th.

There was never a time since the world began when Egypt was not on the stage of history and not on, or near, the front of the stage. The Nile ensured its life, and geographical position gave to it continuity of historical importance. In the beginning, in the era of great river powers, it competed with Mesopotamia, invading and invaded through Palestine. When power shifted from the great rivers to the Mediterranean it was still to the fore, but under alien domination. The discovery of America and the rounding of the Cape still left it on the direct route to the East. The discovery of Australia gave it new potential importance in relation to the opening Southern World and, when the Suez Canal was completed, it stood on an unchallenged main waterway to both East and South. Like Belgium it has been constantly involved in wars not of its own making; it has been a battle ground, a starting-point, and a military base. From Egypt Napoleon invaded Syria, and not long after his time Mehemet Ali's armies almost reached Constantinople. Its record in the years 1914-18 seemed in some sort to combine and partially to reproduce, on a magnified scale and under modern conditions, all the previous phases in its history. Once more it was brought into a war not of its own making; its borders became a battle ground; its soil a military base. It was a base against its own Suzerain, which Suzerain was lord also of Mesopotamia, and the armies which started from the base overran Palestine and Syria. Finally, the alien troops for which Egypt became a great camping ground poured in mainly from India, Australia, and New Zealand, from the East and from the South.

The swarming in of troops of various races, types, and creeds, but all under the British flag, the presence, in the case of the Anzacs, of white soldiers not yet fully disciplined and trained, the monopolizing of Egypt for the purposes of Great Britain's war, was naturally uncongenial to Egyptian sentiment, and there must have been a number of malcontents at Cairo who wished well to the Turks when, in February 1915, Djemal Pasha's troops made their futile attack upon the Suez Canal. It may well have come into Egyptian minds that these troops had crossed, at will and unopposed, by more than one route, the Sinai Peninsula. This was territory from which, less than ten years before, Great Britain had, on behalf of Egypt, excluded Turkey, but now that war between Great

Britain and Turkey had come to pass, it was left, undefended and undisputed, free to the Turks to come and go at will. The failure of the Turkish attack upon the Canal, the evidence of that failure given by the arrival in Egypt of some hundreds of Turks, not as victors but as prisoners, the fact that the success had been achieved mainly by Indian soldiers, including Moslems, was all to the good. The enemies of Great Britain in Egypt cannot have retained much hope that the British armies would be evicted by the Turks even when directed by Germany, and the call to a holy war against the infidels had met with little response. Moreover, so far, in accordance with Sir John Maxwell's promise, Egypt had not been asked actively to share the burden of the war. The Egyptian Army had not taken part in the defence of the Canal, with the exception of machine-gun sections of the Camel Corps, a battery of mountain artillery, and Engineers, though a detachment of the Egyptian garrison at Tor at the southern end of the Gulf of Suez had joined in successfully rounding up a small Turkish force which was threatening that point.

At the beginning of 1915 the economic and industrial outlook of Egypt was gloomy, and the financial year which ended on the 31st of March 1915 ended with a deficit. Expenditure was cut down, new public works were suspended, customs duties, railway, telegraph, postal rates were increased; a deficit was thus gradually turned into a surplus and, though the Nile floods of 1915 were again inadequate, conditions improved as the year went on, the presence of large British forces in the country brought with it equally large expenditure of British money, buying of Egyptian products, employment of Egyptian labour; the demand for cotton revived, and, coupled with the restriction on the area of its cultivation, brought the price back by the end of the year to its pre-war figure. Meanwhile the Gallipoli venture had been taken in hand and, from the end of April 1915, when sick and wounded began to pour in from the Dardanelles, Egypt, in relation to the war, became not only a training ground and starting-point, but a great hospital centre.

From the end of 1915 onwards, as judged by revenue and trade returns, Egypt enjoyed a large measure of war-fed prosperity. Successive budgets showed substantial surpluses, and eventually certain expenditure, to the amount of some

£3,000,000, incurred on behalf of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, which had been carried in a suspense account, was written off by the Egyptian Government 'in recognition of the service rendered to the country by Great Britain in protecting it from the risk of invasion'.<sup>1</sup> The value of imports and exports, as measured in money, grew greatly. The Nile made up for its shortcomings in 1913-15 by giving abundant water during the rest of the war years. The cotton growers obtained enormous prices for their cotton. The loss of enemy markets was in part made good by increased trade with the United States and new trade with Japan, and with the East generally trade and communication was practically safe. In Egypt, as elsewhere, the war developed already known and brought to light new resources. A great stimulus was given to Egyptian petroleum and, before the war ended, manganese was exported from the Sinai Peninsula. But in Egypt, as elsewhere, there was another side to the shield. 'The accumulation of wealth', said the High Commissioner's Report for 1914-19, 'has been accompanied by a great and rapid rise in the cost of living, and the resulting economic distress among the poor is the source of grave concern to the Government.'<sup>2</sup> The immense profit to be derived from cotton discouraged the growth of cereals, and at the same time continuously increasing scarcity of shipping restricted the import of food-stuffs and raised their price. The result was that the cost of some of the prime necessities of life after the war was from two to three times higher than before the war, and the dominant feature of the economic result of the war was summed up in the Report as 'the enormous increase, unevenly distributed, of the country's accumulated wealth and the greatly increased cost of certain commodities and of housing accommodation'.<sup>3</sup> This meant that, as the war went on, its effects were specially felt by the lower classes, the mass of the population, to whom British control had brought relief, security, and justice, and who, before the war, had not been disposed to quarrel with a régime under which their lot had been bettered beyond compare. Town centres are always liable to excitement and unrest, and in the towns the malcontent few are in immediate touch with the multitude; the poor in Cairo, therefore, feeling the pinch of want, would be easily stirred, but it was more

<sup>1</sup> Egypt No. 1, 1920, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 5-6.



serious when the country peasantry began to feel the pinch and when requisitions, called forth by the war, began in some sort to recall memories of the exactions of former years. The Government Service, too, with the exception of the lowest ranks, till late in 1919 received no war bonus to compensate for the rise in the cost of living which made their salaries inadequate and must have been the cause of discontent.

Through 1915 Egypt was in the first stage, the more passive stage, of participation in the war. At the beginning of the year it was attacked and defended on the eastern side, the side of the Canal. As the year went out, and at the beginning of 1916, it was attacked and defended on the western side, where the Senussi were induced by Turkish pressure to give trouble. The defence was in the main loyally carried out by the armies of the British Empire, and for that purpose all the time the medley of incoming soldiers was on the increase. New Zealand Maories had long appeared on the scene. White soldiers from South Africa, the South African Brigade, at the outset of its brilliant career came in at the beginning of 1916. The first three months of 1916 saw the entry of a new strain of coloured troops, the first three battalions of the British West Indies Regiment. The hospitals, meanwhile, were crowded with sick and wounded from the Dardanelles, and the beneficent agencies for camp and hospital, the Young Men's Christian Association, and the Red Cross, with constantly multiplying personnel, by their very titles were capable of being interpreted as a kind of challenge to Mohammedanism. As a matter of fact, in the course of the war, a Red Cross collection was so interpreted. Moreover, the support given in high quarters to Red Cross appeals led on to compulsory subscription.

After the evacuation of Gallipoli, and when the immediate borders of Egypt had been more or less cleared on either side, a new chapter opened. Egypt became the base of a great offensive, a starting-point of conquest; the armies were styled the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, and constantly increasing numbers of Egyptians, including units of the Egyptian Army, were brought actively into the war. At this point Egypt lost the services of Sir John Maxwell, and the good soldier who entered into supreme command, Sir Archibald Murray, had not the same long experience of local conditions and insight

into local feeling. On the other hand, the transfer from the Sudan to Egypt at the beginning of 1917 of Sir Reginald Wingate gave to Egypt, in succession to Sir Henry Macmahon, a High Commissioner who combined a soldier's appreciation of military requirements with intimate first-hand knowledge of the land and the people. Up to the end of 1915 Sir John Maxwell had been in sole military command in Egypt and on its borders, east and west. On the 9th of January 1916 Sir Archibald Murray reached Cairo to take over command of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, the evacuation of Gallipoli having at that moment been successfully completed, and the force being, as he described it, in a state of transition. For a brief space there was a dual command. Murray was responsible for the security of the eastern side and of the Suez Canal. Maxwell was in charge of the Nile valley, the delta, and the western border, and carried through the Senussi campaign and the reoccupation of El Sollum. But on the 19th of March the whole Egyptian command was transferred to Murray, Maxwell left Egypt, and what had been the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, with the exception of the troops at Salonika, became thenceforward the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, the change of title indicating that Egypt was being more and more drawn into the main stream of the war. So far but few calls had been made upon the Egyptian Army for actual fighting in defence of Egypt or otherwise. The dispatches telling of the border warfare on either side make mention of the presence of artillery and machine-gun sections of that army, of Egyptian Engineers and other small units. There were, more or less in the ordinary course, Egyptian garrisons at one frontier post or another, as at El Sollum before it was evacuated under pressure of the Senussi, but on the whole the promise given that Egypt would be safeguarded by the forces of the British Empire had been faithfully carried out. None the less, Egyptian co-operation had been very greatly in evidence, and from the Sultan downwards all the departments of the Egyptian Government gave every help. In a dispatch of the 1st of March 1916, Maxwell wrote that 'the entire resources of Egypt, military and civil, were unhesitatingly given to further the necessities' of the Dardanelles expedition, and that 'every branch of the Egyptian Government has been used to the uttermost with their whole and ungrudg-

ing consent', and moreover with the result of probing and developing the resources of Egypt to a surprising degree. Murray's first published dispatch, dated the 1st of June 1916, told the same tale. The Egyptian Survey, Public Works, Railway, Telegraph, Medical Departments all gave their utmost to the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, and as the advance went forward through the Sinai Peninsula, clearing, it will be remembered, Egyptian territory, so active Egyptian co-operation grew in volume and in kind. Murray's next dispatch, dated the 1st of October 1916, mentions employment of units of the Egyptian Army in guarding communications, in garrison work and, to some extent, in frontier fighting, armoured trains, camel maxim sections, and cavalry. Egyptian reservists were called up for work on the Canal defences, retired Egyptian officers volunteered for service, the Egyptian military hospital at Cairo was lent to the New Zealanders, the Egyptian Postal Service aided and supplemented the Army Postal Service; labour, camels, war materials, stores of all kinds, were forthcoming from Egypt and the Sudan. So it went on. As the great army, first under Murray then under Allenby, no longer defending but invading, advanced into Palestine, as the long line of advance grew longer, so the personnel of the Egyptian Army was more and more utilized, until that army, to some degree in all its arms, was involved in the war, co-operating with the main army and also with the Arabs in the Hejaz, though principally behind the fighting front and on the lines of communication. In his dispatch of the 18th of September 1918 Lord Allenby summed up that 'Egypt has provided transport, personnel, drivers for the Camel Transport Corps, and men for the Egyptian Labour Corps in large numbers, in addition to several units of the Egyptian Army. These have all done work which, though unostentatious, has been of great value'.

It was in the provision of human labour and of transport animals, camels and donkeys, that Egypt co-operated in the war on the largest scale, and it was in this direction that the war most vitally affected the Egyptian people and complicated the industrial and political conditions of Egypt. In 1915 a certain amount of Egyptian labour was employed in connexion with the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, and on the 1st of January 1916 the total number of officers and men in the

Egyptian Labour Corps stood at 3,000. During 1916 between 10,000 and 11,000 Egyptian workmen were sent to France, 8,000 to Mesopotamia, and 600 to Salonika. As long as the demand was moderate it was supplied without difficulty from the large cities, with occasional recruiting in Upper Egypt, but, as the year 1916 wore on, the demand increased, especially for the Camel Transport Corps, and for that corps a small recruiting staff was set to work in Upper Egypt, the delta being left as a recruiting field for ordinary labour. From the end of 1916 the demand grew greatly, as the Egyptian Expeditionary Force went forward, and its numbers multiplied. A regular organization was created, an Inspectorate of Recruiting, with 26 officers at work from Alexandria to Aswan. The organization grew steadily. There was an Inspector of Recruiting, supplied by the Egyptian Ministry of the Interior, an Inspector of the Egyptian Labour Corps, a Director of Labour at General Head-quarters, Assistant Directors, three recruiting camps in Egypt where the men were clothed, equipped, and formed into companies. Officers were selected from British units and given extra pay for proficiency in Arabic; Egyptian subjects of European descent were employed as sergeants and foremen. Eventually, when the Armistice came, some 135,000 Egyptians were being employed with the Egyptian Expeditionary Force and, inasmuch as they were employed on six months' contracts, the total annual supply of Egyptian labour amounted to 270,000 men, exclusive of replacement of casualties. Of this total the Labour Corps absorbed 100,000, over 23,000 were drivers in the Camel Transport Corps, and horse and donkey transport took some 6,000. Drivers and artificers were forthcoming for mechanical transport, a school for training Egyptian motor-lorry drivers being formed at Cairo, and workmen, both skilled and unskilled, were employed at the Ordnance Depot at El Qantara. The Egyptian Labour Corps provided railway and road makers, stevedores at the ports, hands for well-boring, draining, and sanitary work. Admirable workers they were, cited in the reports as 'examples of intensive labour' and 'teams of cheerful Egyptians'. Here is Lord Allenby's testimony in his dispatch of the 31st of October 1918: 'From the first day of operations the Egyptian Labour Corps has followed the troops as they advanced, working hard and successfully to improve

the roads. On September 19 companies were working on the roads in front of our original line, while our guns were still firing. The Camel Transport Corps have rendered valuable services, which have greatly aided in the victorious campaign.' In a previous dispatch he called attention to 'the steadiness under fire and the devotion to duty in the face of cold and rain', to which they were strangers, shown by the drivers of the Camel Transport Corps, and noted that the hardships were shared by the Labour Corps; and unofficial observers told the same story of Egyptian labour men as 'willing helpers of British troops'.<sup>1</sup> The writer of these last words, Mr. W. T. Massey, expressed the opinion that 'the Egyptian who did service with General Allenby's army had during the war the best time of his life', that he was far better paid and better fed than in Egypt, and had a good allowance of leave; and the readiness to re-enlist testified to contentment with the conditions of service.

But there was another side to the picture. The casualties were not inconsiderable, not so much from shot and shell as from exposure and disease; and as the pressure of the war increased, so the working and peasant population of Egypt felt it more and more. The high type of officers, who knew the language and the Egyptian mind and character, could not be wholly maintained, and there was an inevitable admixture of less trained and less careful men. The call was ever for more and more labour, and the call was answered through native officials in the country districts who applied indirect pressure which savoured of compulsion. There was again an unceasing demand for transport animals, and Egypt was drained of its camels and donkeys. We are told that an average of some 40,000 camels was maintained in the field for between two and three years, and that the annual losses were about 30 per cent., the losses in horses and donkeys being about 16 per cent. The fellahin received good prices for their animals, but, none the less, they lost the use of them and, when the war was over, were obliged in many cases to buy them back at an increased price. Grain, too, was requisitioned at fixed prices lower than the rapidly mounting market rates, and all the conditions played into the hands of native local

<sup>1</sup> *Allenby's Final Triumph*, by W. T. Massey. 1920, Constable & Co., pp. 176 and 210.

officials, many of whom, as in the bad old times, knew well how to make illicit gains at the expense of the common people. Finally, collections for the Red Cross, intended to be purely voluntary, became in many cases far other than freewill offerings, and, as already noticed, on the face of it the Red Cross was not likely to commend itself to the people of the Crescent.<sup>1</sup>

It may be summed up that the effect of the war upon Egypt was to create at once much wealth and much poverty and, when the war was over, the population, we are told, presented 'extreme contrasts of ease and want'.<sup>2</sup> The same might be said, no doubt, of most countries, but the case of Egypt was to a large extent unique, and pre-existing conditions made the war peculiarly unsettling. Always a very cosmopolitan land, the war made it more cosmopolitan than ever, overrun with incomers from all parts of the earth. Its services in the war were great and substantial, but brought distinction to others rather than to the Egyptians themselves. The strain of the war, the high cost of living, came home most to the classes to whom in the past British control had brought most relief, but from whom British supervision had for the time been largely removed by the war. The political unrest, which before the war was rife in a section of the mixed community, in consequence of the war gained support from far more widespread economic and industrial discontent. All the elements that made for restlessness had inevitably been strengthened, and Nationalists could fairly claim that much use had been made of Egypt, that therefore much was due to her, but that, on the contrary, the self-determination which was put into practice in other cases was not conceded in the case of Egypt. All the elements that make for contentment, the presence of experienced and sympathetic officers, the prosecution of beneficent public works and the like had, on the other hand, for the time inevitably been weakened. Always a land of contrasts, Egypt was a land of contrasts still. The war set it free for ever from Turkish domination and Turkish interference, but it left it complaining as though it had once more been conquered, and had been made the tool of oppressors, whereas in truth it had co-operated in the overthrow of the Turks and thereby in the achievement of its own freedom.

<sup>1</sup> Reference should be made to *A Brief Record of the Advance of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, July 1917 to October 1918, compiled from Official Sources, 1919*, coupled with *The Report of the Special Mission to Egypt, Egypt No. 1, 1921, Cmd. 1131*.

<sup>2</sup> Egypt No. 1, 1921, *ut supra*, p. 3.

## SECTION II

### THE FIGHTING IN EGYPT, SINAI, AND PALESTINE

*By Lieutenant-Colonel G. W. Rhys Jenkins*

#### CHAPTER I

##### THE NEAR EASTERN FRONT <sup>1</sup>

THE outbreak of war brought to Great Britain new and greater responsibilities in the Near and Middle East. How those difficulties were met and a new policy developed may well prove to have been one of the most momentous chapters in British history. The deliverance from Turkish misrule of Palestine, Syria, and Mesopotamia, a new epoch in Egypt, the rise of Arab States, and the widening of British influence over a vast area, created political and economic problems immeasurably more complex than those of the past.

Germany had a fully planned war policy to gain her ambition of world power. If at any time in the few years previous to 1914 a German had been asked if he had faith and belief in Pan-Germanism, could he have been expected to say no? His very national existence, he had been taught to believe, depended on the future success of his Pan-German theories. The salvation of Germany could only be achieved by a great world war, which, if brought to a successful issue, would mean an enormous extension of Germanic frontiers and the military or political control of many large neighbouring zones. To

<sup>1</sup> In the different volumes and sections of this work the fighting in Egypt, Sinai, and Palestine is treated in different connexions and from different angles. The following account of the operations is not intended to be in any sense an exhaustive narrative, but gives the first-hand impressions of an eyewitness, with special reference to topography. The writer, Lieutenant-Colonel G. W. Rhys Jenkins, served in these countries through most of the war, and had exceptional opportunities of studying the operations and the lie of the land both during the war and immediately afterwards. Greater space is allowed to the defence of the Suez Canal, the advance through Sinai, and the first stages in Palestine than to the well-known brilliant finale, and special prominence is given to the work of the mounted troops from Australia and New Zealand.

this end it was necessary first to gain the possession of safe and adequate lines of communication to all areas of proposed action. The initial step then was to establish such main lines across and through the Pan-German map of ambition. Let us imagine the form of this map.

It was a huge rectangle, with one end across the North Sea and the Baltic. It formed a broad band including a part of Western and Southern Russia and stretching away in a Prussian blue tint, so as to comprise the whole of Austria-Hungary, Rumania, the Balkan States, Turkey, Mesopotamia, Arabia, and Persia. Through this great rectangular mass there would be a central line of communication running, like a main artery, from north-west to south-east, from the North Sea to India, via the Danube, Constantinople, Baghdad, and the Persian Gulf. On the east, running parallel, another dark line of communication and defence, the eastern frontier of political Poland, on to Persia and Northern India, to be made secure by the complete downfall of Imperial Russia. Again, a third line west of the Rhine, a western rampart of overpowering strength, running from the English Channel, west of the Alps and dominating Italy, the Adriatic, the Eastern Mediterranean, the Suez Canal and the Red Sea, making safe the Near East and the far outposts of German East and South-West Africa, future bases for extension of German power throughout the African Continent.

The western flank was first to be made good. It would be a difficult task, but in this dream, by quick and terrible blows, France would be brought to her knees, England paralysed, and Italy and Spain would easily follow. On the east Russia could be devoured piecemeal at leisure. A premature bluff at Agadir some years before rather gave away the game. That little corner of Africa would have made the Mediterranean problem much easier for the realization of Pan-German theories and would have served as an excellent base for the future conquest of South America. On this great map can be traced further lines of a network of lateral and inter-communication like an immense spider-web, all lines emanating from or leading to Berlin and the extremes of three Continents.

In the Near East was the Turkish power, to be harnessed if possible to German ambitions, and outstanding in the Near East was the Suez Canal. There can be no question as to the



supreme importance to the British Empire of the Suez Canal. It was and is the main line of communication with India, with Australia and New Zealand, with the Straits Settlements and China, with British East Africa. Napoleon had seen in Egypt a point where a vital blow might be struck at Great Britain at a time when the eastern hemisphere did not mean to Great Britain one-quarter of what it meant in 1914, and it was natural that those who hoped to succeed where Napoleon had failed should wish to profit by the fact that in Egypt the British Empire had a vulnerable land frontier, vulnerable at least if Turkey could be brought into the war. To Germany the essential importance of securing the Turkish alliance lay in two things ; on the one hand it closed one line of communications between Russia and the Western Powers, on the other it threatened the Suez Canal and thereby compelled England to allot to securing that key-position no insignificant portion of her available strength. Moreover, this could be done without detaching a single German soldier from the Western Front. In the campaigns in the Near East the British Empire employed at one time and another between twenty and thirty divisions ; it is doubtful if the Germans sent as many battalions. But for the Turkish menace to the Canal another brigade of the Lahore Division might have given invaluable help to Allenby in his struggle to hold the Messines Ridge or brought relief to Smith-Dorrien's exhausted men in front of Neuve Chapelle ; if the Indian Army had not had Mesopotamia on its hands German East Africa might have been reduced in 1915. But the defence of Egypt was imposed upon Great Britain from the start as vital ; it was a spot where she could not afford to run risks, where she must possess an ample margin of that safety which is the limiting condition of the doctrine of concentration of maximum forces at a decisive point. The saying that ' attack is the best defence ' is well illustrated in the story of the operations which followed the second Turco-German attack on Egypt ; the dangerous consequences which may follow upon undertaking offensive operations even for defensive purposes in a minor theatre of war are no less cogently exemplified in the story of the advance into Palestine than in that of the advance up the Tigris.

The record of the Near Eastern Front contains a large proportion of deeds of Overseas troops. At the beginning it fell to

the lot of some units of the Indian Army to meet the first attack on the Suez Canal and to save Egypt. In the next stage, termed the offensive defence, Australian and New Zealand troops were among the first in battle as they had already been in Gallipoli. They were in the front in Western Egypt and later across the desert of Sinai, through El 'Arish, Rafah, Gaza, Beersheba, on to Jerusalem, in the Jordan valley, on the hills of Moab, in the final rush through and around Damascus, and the last shots fired in action on the Aleppo road were by Australian, New Zealand, or Indian soldiers.

Much of the heavy fighting fell to British divisions; their tenacious work was always the foundation, but the Overseas cavalry divisions were foremost in building on their foundation, and the final stroke which completed the ruin of the Turkish power was dealt by an army in which two-thirds of the infantry and a full third of the cavalry were Indian.

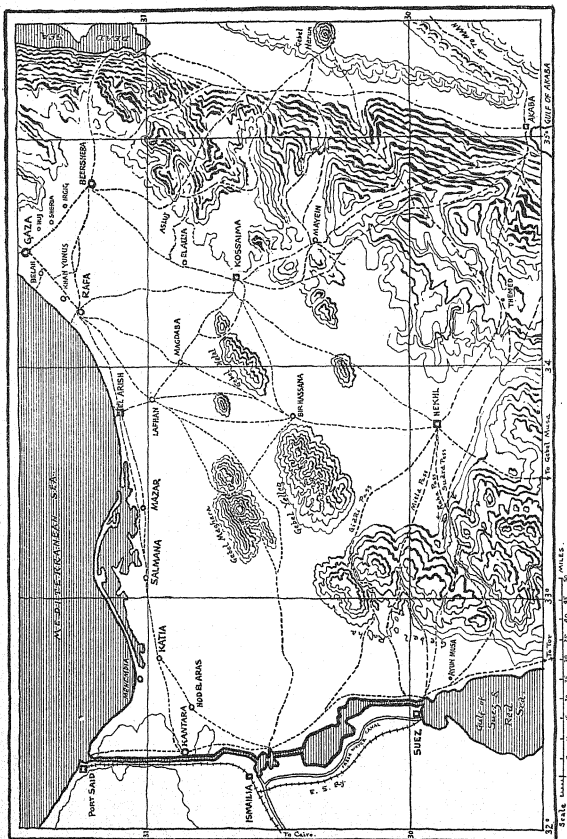
## CHAPTER II

### THE SUEZ CANAL AND THE SINAI PENINSULA

SEVERAL armies have succeeded in crossing the Sinai Desert. Sultan Selim led his Janissaries into Cairo, Napoleon marched from Cairo to Acre and back again, a Turkish army met Kléber at Heliopolis near Cairo in 1799, another army crossed the desert to help Abercromby. The armies of Mehemet Ali and Ibrahim Pasha crossed the coastal plain through El 'Arish, and Suleiman Pasha withdrew his Egyptian force from Syria by way of the valley of Aqaba, south of the Dead Sea and through Nekl to Suez.

The success or failure of such marches has always depended largely on weather conditions. Rain fell in 1914 during a considerable part of the season, with a result of more water than usual in wells and cisterns, especially in the northern portion of the Sinai Peninsula, which has the advantage of some forage in parts, better defined routes than in the south, with a few villages and numbers of wells, many of which are stone-lined. These conditions, coupled with German staff organization and the known hardiness and resourcefulness of Turkish troops, indicated the probability of an attempt being made by the Turks to reach the Canal.

The Suez Canal had many advantages as a defence line and constituted in itself a strong military obstacle. It is easily defended, but if its navigation had been interrupted the result would have been to delay the movement of vast quantities of war supplies and troops for our campaigns in Mesopotamia and German East Africa and for the time to cut, with serious consequences, our more direct communication with India. Such an event would have been a damaging blow to British morale at the very outset, and would have caused much loss of prestige. It would have entailed a most serious demand upon our then very limited resources, for it would have been immediately necessary to gain and hold the further bank of the Canal in order to cover the difficult undertaking of the repairs required to reopen navigation, while the delay would have enabled the enemy to concentrate large forces east of



CARAVAN ROUTES IN THE SINAI PENINSULA

Note.—This is a contemporary sketch-map and contains different spellings from those adopted in the text

the Canal, ready to take advantage of any opportunity to effect a crossing.

The three principal sections of the Suez Canal connect Lakes Ballah, Timsah, the Bitter and Little Bitter Lakes. These lakes and the inundations effected to the east of Lake Menzaleh at the Port Said end of the Canal greatly restricted the length of line which the defending force required to hold. By establishing our 'line of resistance' on the west bank of the Canal and (in so far as our strength enabled us to do so) our 'line of contact' to the east of the canal, the frontage to be held was about one-third of that involved in a permanent occupation of the eastern bank. This, however, had the disadvantage of letting the Turk get closer to the Canal than would have been the case had our numbers allowed us to place our line of resistance east of the Canal.

The first project of the enemy (apart from his hopes of effecting a crossing to coincide with a native rising in Egypt) was to get floating mines into the Canal and so effect an interruption of navigation and prevent the movement or use of our gunboats. This would have opened our side to attack on any one of the three or four scattered sectors, and our forces could not have been concentrated quickly enough at any given point. The problem then was to keep the enemy as far away as possible from the Canal, which in itself had great advantages of lateral communication. Firstly, it was suitable for all classes of water transport; secondly, the Egyptian State Railway was in operation throughout its entire length from Suez to Port Said; thirdly, a freshwater canal extends parallel to it for a good part of the way, suitable for a considerable volume of light-craft traffic, which would leave the main channel clear for deepwater shipping. In addition to the above, excellent roads, fit for motor traffic, which were extended and improved, ran along the whole frontage. At a later period motor roads were built on the east bank, from all bridge-heads forward to the first-line trench-system some miles out among the desert foot-hills. The Canal itself, given a number of gunboats, would provide a line of movable fortress defences, which could not be turned or broken except by application of large quantities of heavy explosives, mines or batteries of artillery heavy enough to sink ships of war.

The desert marches for the enemy could be negotiated by

infantry, cavalry, and light artillery, but to bring across heavy guns and mines of sufficient power seemed an impossible task, however enterprising the German Staff and Turkish Army might be. The problem of such a desert movement may well be considered in relation to the topography, firstly, of the Canal zone (our terrain of defence), then of that part of the Sinai Peninsula which the enemy had to cross.

From the Gulf of Suez to Port Said is about 100 miles, but the actual Canal cutting in this distance, represented as a military line of defence, occupies about a third of that distance; the remaining portion of the Canal consists of channels through the Great and Little Bitter Lakes, Lakes Timsah and Ballah, to which should be added the flooded areas created in the northern sector by cutting the banks. These lake and marsh sectors would be impassable obstacles for counter-attack, except on the part of light-draught gunboats, which were employed by us in patrol duties at one stage of the campaign. The solution would seem to have been to build up and strongly occupy bridge-heads at several different points. No disposition of our forces, however, could have been made to avoid the serious danger of our positions being open to the enemy's gunfire, as the topography in every case would have left our works badly exposed.

Broadly speaking, the Canal had more advantages than not as a defence line for Egypt. The enemy's chances of success could only have been good with the enterprising use and development of his lines of communication, supply, and transport from Palestine, through one or more routes of the desert. In order to concentrate an effective force on any one or more points he had to make long and difficult marches just previous to an attack. With effective reconnaissance on our part, both by ground and air, we could determine which direction his concentration was likely to take, at least from three to five days before he could come within effective striking distance of the Canal.

Before describing how far he was able to do this (and he showed no mean ability up to a certain point), the topography of the Sinai Peninsula must be looked at as a whole. The western boundaries are the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Suez. On the east it is divided from Palestine by a line running north from the Gulf of Aqaba to the shores of the Mediterranean at

the beginning of the coastal Palestine plains. In its desert character it forms a difficult barrier to communication between Egypt and the East, giving it peculiar importance in strategy throughout history. It has always been dominated by the rulers of Egypt for the time being. Under the 4th Dynasty, some 3,700 B. C., it was held by an Egyptian garrison. In the sixth century A. D. Justinian built and garrisoned the monastery and fort of Mount Sinai (Gebel Musa or the Mountain of Moses) which later on was occupied by the Mamelukes. In 1914 the eastern frontier of the Peninsula was held by a very small force of Egyptian Military Police who had to evacuate it, not, however, without some sharp fighting.

The peninsula is somewhat triangular in shape, with its base on the Mediterranean and its apex on the Red Sea. Its northern part might be described as an undulating plain, with a few scattered groups of abrupt hills, limestone peaks, or ridges, none of which follow a definite hill system. The southern portion of Sinai is a labyrinth of steep mountains and narrow rocky valleys. The whole of the peninsula is complete desert, with the exception of a very few areas in the north at Qatiya and, in the east-central portion, the Kossaima Oasis. These places have constant water and fuel sufficient to maintain considerable military forces. Fodder and grain for animals, rations for men, and, in most parts, water for both men and animals, have to be transported by baggage camels. Some portions are suitable for wheel transport and several roads were made and developed by the Turks during the latter part of 1915 or the early months of 1916. Otherwise no roads were in existence. In the north a few indifferent camel routes could be traced and the old Turkish telegraph lines, from Palestine by the coast and another to the south-west towards Suez, indicated routes for traders' caravans. In the south only devious and rocky mountain tracks exist.

The total number of inhabitants of the Sinai Peninsula in 1914 was about 35,000, of whom 9,000 to 10,000 were males and the remainder women and children, scattered about at long distances, nomadic Arabs or Bedouins. These were divided into some seventeen minor tribes, under the head of Sheikhs, each a law (or a striking absence of law) unto himself, having little control over so scattered and moving a population. In the

southern-central portion is a plateau bounded by a rocky range of hills running north and south, with elevations reaching to 2,700 feet. Through these hills are four principal passes leading to the various caravan routes eastward: the Wadi el Giddi, Wadi um Mitla, Wadi el Raha, and the Wadi Sudra, which afford routes through the rugged hills up and out, to the central plateau, on which stands Nekl, where were the administrative head-quarters of the Province of Sinai. Across a valley, about 10 miles to the north-east, rises the Gebel Yelleg, standing boldly up between the two main caravan routes from Suez to Syria. Beyond this group of hills is a broad plain for about 15 miles and then the heights of Gebel Helal. In the middle of this plain lies Bir Hassana, a most important road junction; farther to the north are the steep ridges of Gebel Maghara. These hills are of a hard limestone formation overlying chalk, and are extremely steep, full of sharp edges and sudden deep cuttings and wadis. The main watercourse to the northern part of the peninsula is the Wadi El 'Arish (the ancient 'River of Egypt') which starts in the central part of the plateau region and runs northward, through deep precipitous gorges, out across the northern plains to the Mediterranean at El 'Arish. Most of the watercourses of Northern Sinai are tributary to this valley.

The north coast is characterized by a belt of sand-dunes, rising east of the depression in which the Suez Canal is cut, and following that contour up from Suez along the Mediterranean shore to Syria. This belt of soft and shifting dunes varies in width from about 10 miles at Suez to about 30 miles east of Ismailia; then it turns eastward along the coast and narrows to a breadth of about 5 miles at Rafah on the frontier of Palestine.

The watercourses (Wadis) of Northern Sinai are hardly more than nominal watercourses, as water is not found in them except after a cloud-burst or very infrequent heavy rains. In some cases they remain dry for years, but are liable to flood very suddenly after a heavy downfall. In some valleys this occurs every year, in others the channels have been dry for periods of twenty years or more.

The roads or caravan routes are of necessity situated on the lines where water is most often found. Only in a few and far-separated localities are there wells which can be depended on all the year round. Of these there is one spot, south-east



of Suez in Gebel Somar, where there are a number of ravines in which are many springs giving good quantities of water at all seasons. In the Kossaima district there are four good sources of water, a few miles apart, giving a considerable quantity. At Qatiya on the main route from Qantara, only a few miles east of the canal, water is found near the surface, in the palm groves of that oasis. Nowhere is there fuel of much consequence—the tamarisk scrub, which grows in some quantities in wadis, burns too quickly to be of any value.

Water when found is as follows : (i) In dug wells ; a well of this kind is called a Bir (plural *biar* or *biyar*), and it generally holds some quantity all the year round. (ii) In Hods or shallow wells under the palm groves of oases in the coastal plain. (iii) Running or drip water on the surface, which is called an Ain (plural *ayun*). (iv) In a Thamilet or depression (plural *themails*), where water collects only after heavy rains and soon dries up. (v) In an Imshash, larger water-hole, generally stone lined, which sometimes accumulates a sufficient supply to last many months. On the Palestine frontier are many rock-cut cisterns, called harabas, some of which are roofed over, of considerable size, having a capacity of several thousands of gallons.

The most important attack on the Canal developed from the northern route of approach, on the same line by which our advance was gradually carried through to Palestine. As roads go in this ' Desert of Zin ', the coastal route may be called a good road. There are a few stretches of very heavy going in soft sand, notably near Qatiya, but for the most part it is a passable country for both cavalry and infantry, but not negotiable for wheel transport. Most of the way water is obtainable at frequent intervals, the longest dry stretch being the 20 miles between Mazar and Thamila, just west of the valley of El 'Arish. For the first 25 miles or so the route passes along the edge of the group of oases in the Qatiya area, in which are over 40,000 date palms in scattered groups, and among them numerous wells. Water of sorts can be obtained almost anywhere by shallow digging, but the quality of the water makes it of little use except for animals ; it varies from abundant and indifferent to scarce and brackish, so on to Rafah, the frontier, where water becomes more plentiful and good, the cultivated zones of the southern Palestine plains being then reached.

## CHAPTER III

### THE CANAL DEFENCES

THE entry of Turkey into the war meant that immediate action had to be taken for the protection of the Suez Canal, and November 1914 saw the beginning of a couple of years of activity and excitement along the 'ditch', such as had never been seen before.

East of the northern section of the Canal for some miles to beyond Pelusium and south of the ridge of sand-dunes along the Mediterranean shore of Sinai, the ground is below sea-level. The Canal from Port Said south for some miles is between dikes, which in January 1915 were cut, allowing the sea-water to flood a large area to the east, with the result of shortening the line to be defended by a good twenty miles.<sup>1</sup>

A few strong posts were sited and well entrenched on the east bank, covering places of ferry-crossings, but owing to the very limited forces then in Egypt the main defences had of necessity to be established on the west bank, consisting of various groups of field works covering places most likely to be attempted as crossings. Two sections of armoured trains were built in the shops of the Egyptian State Railway and kept at points of danger with sufficient rolling stock, ready for the rapid movement of troops. Now was found the strategic value of a railway running parallel with the Canal, while the fresh-water canal became useful not only for movement of supplies but also as providing water for troops and animals.

At the beginning of 1915 the enemy, having well established his force at El 'Auja south of Beersheba, had pushed on and occupied Kossaima in Central and El 'Arish in Northern Sinai, the northern advance being based on Khan Yunis near the Mediterranean, just east of the Palestine frontier. By the end of January a considerable Turkish force was in Sinai and steadily moving toward the Canal.

The force taking over the defences of the Canal zones was

<sup>1</sup> During the winter of 1915-16 further considerable areas were flooded, reducing our frontage by nearly 40 miles.

composed of two divisions of infantry from India, in which was included one brigade of Imperial Service troops. They were, however, weak in artillery, having only two batteries of mountain guns, and they were without technical units, such as a Signal Company. With them were a brigade of Imperial Service Cavalry and the Bikaner Camel Corps, also Imperial Service troops. Behind them were the East Lancashire Territorial Division, who had relieved the Regular garrison in September, and the Australians and New Zealanders who were completing their training in Egypt. Portions of these formations took part in the fighting of February 1915 along the Canal, but for the most part they were not engaged, and the brunt of the actions fell upon the Indian troops who acquitted themselves with great gallantry. Co-operating with our land forces were H.M.S. *Swiftsure*, *Ocean*, *Minerva*, and *Clio*, which took up duty in the Canal, and two French ships, one of which, the *Requin*, at a later date supported from the sea our attack on Gaza. A French hydroplane squadron did most valuable service in co-operation with a detachment of the Royal Flying Corps.

In January 1915 Djemal Pasha, with Major Von der Hagen, was in command of the Turkish forces now nearing the Canal. One portion had advanced along the coast route from Khan Yunis about 125 miles away via Rafah, El 'Arish, Qatiya, and Dueidar, and was strongly entrenched about 5 miles east of Qantara, the most important station in the northern section of the Canal.

The main Turkish advance had at the same time been pushed westward through the central portion of the peninsula—starting from the Turkish base at Beersheba on the south-western frontier of Palestine via El 'Auja, Bir Ruafa, Bir Hamma, Bir Jifjaffa—the objective being the central section of the Canal joining Lake Timsah to the Great Bitter Lake. Then followed spasmodic attacks (not in great force) on various British posts on the east bank of the Canal, at Kubri and Serapeum south of the Bitter Lake, at the ferry near Ismailia in the central sector, and at Ferdan in the north. The enemy seemed more disposed to entrench themselves, to hold points of vantage for the time being, as if to invite attack, but on February 3rd they launched a main stroke in force near Tussum and Serapeum in the central sector simultaneously

with feint attacks on the ferry at Ismailia and on Ferdan and Qantara in the north. At Tussum three determined and well-directed attempts were made to cross, and if they had succeeded it would have been very damaging, as this point is within easy distance of the railway lines from Cairo, Suez, and Port Said, and near the line of the Sweet Water Canal.

Lieutenant-General Sir J. G. Maxwell, commanding the force in Egypt, had placed the defences of the Canal in the hands of Major-General Alex. Wilson, with Brigadier-General A. H. Bingley as his chief staff officer. Up to the middle of November 1914 the Canal defences were held by the 9th Indian Brigade, which had been detached for temporary duty in Egypt from the 3rd (Lahore) Division. The Canal line, as then organized, was divided into three sections, with head-quarters at Suez, Ismailia Ferry, and Qantara, General Head-quarters being at Ismailia. By the beginning of December the last unit of the 10th and 11th Indian Divisions had arrived from India, and an effective disposition had been completed along the Canal, to wait the opening of what proved to be a campaign of great importance to the Near East. In November, December, and January the force was busily occupied in developing the defences. Communications were improved, much trenching done, and pontoon bridges for each sector completed. A Canal patrol of armed launches was organized and manned by the Royal Navy, a detachment of the Royal Flying Corps with observers was equipped and set in motion, supply depots were established, railway arrangements were improved, and the work of inundation at El Cap, Qantara, and Ballah in the northern sector completed.

No attack had as yet developed except a daring raid made by Bedouins, which culminated in the treacherous use of a white flag near Bir-el-Nus about 22 miles east of Qantara in the northern sector. A patrol of the Bikaner Camel Corps lost one Indian officer, with twelve other ranks killed and three wounded. Up to the middle of January there was no enemy activity, beyond Bedouin patrols, in many cases under command of German officers dressed as Arabs, and the country within radius of our aerial reconnaissance showed no formed bodies of hostile troops. After the 15th of January it became evident that 'Jacko' (as the Turk was at once named by the Australians) was advancing in some strength, and our line

was reinforced from Cairo by the 1st and 3rd Brigades, Royal Field Artillery, of the East Lancashire Territorial Division.

On the 22nd of January the Turks had forces at Moiyaharab, by the way of Jifjaffa 50 miles east of Ismailia, and at Ain Sadr on the central line of advance. Our mounted troops came into touch with a small hostile force near Bir-el-Dueidar, only about 12 miles east of Qantara. Four days later a force of some 3,000 advanced on our covering troops east of Qantara and after a short engagement retired. About this time the New Zealand Infantry Brigade arrived from Cairo. The Otago and Wellington battalions reinforced Kubri; the brigade head-quarters, with the Auckland and Canterbury Battalions, joined our reserves at Ismailia. Qantara, Ballah, El Shatt, and Shaluf were strengthened by moving the *Swiftsure*, *Olio*, *Ocean*, and *Minerva* to those respective posts. During the 27th and 28th two or three spasmodic attacks were made at given points and the enemy was considerably reinforced, entrenching himself about 5 miles east of Qantara across the main road. For the next three days he gradually closed in towards the Canal, especially to the east of Ismailia, in the central sector, and this was followed by a small affair of outposts on the 2nd of February, after which he entrenched about 2 miles to the south-east of our defences on the east bank.

In the early morning of the 3rd the main attempt to cross the Canal took place about a mile to the south of Tussum. The plan was to effect a crossing by launching a number of light pontoons and rafts under the cover of heavy machine-gun and rifle fire from the east bank. Several pontoons were launched and two or three actually succeeded in crossing. This very sharp enterprise was soon checked by the 62nd Punjabis and the 5th Battery Egyptian Artillery. It is most significant (if we now look back on the attempts of Germany and the Young Turk to start a holy war) that this daring attempt with sharp fighting should have been met by a unit of the Indian Army, covered by native Egyptian artillery. Some pontoons were sunk and the Turks suffered heavy casualties. A counter-attack was directed from Serapeum against a strong enemy force, who were obliged to retire, and in the neighbourhood of Tussum nearly 300 prisoners were taken while a considerable number of dead were left on the bank of the Canal. The enemy

had made three distinct attempts to cross the Canal, one boat-load landing at 'mile 48', all of whom were killed or wounded when charged by the 62nd Punjabis. Two other boats got across at 'mile 47', where 30 Turks were killed or captured by the 2nd Rajputs. A number of pontoons which had been got forward to the east bank were destroyed by shell fire or captured by our troops before being launched.

In the morning of the 3rd H.M.S. *Hardinge* had her funnel split and steering gear disabled by two 6-inch shells, and her place had to be taken by the *Swiftsure*. On this same morning unsuccessful attacks were made at Ismailia Ferry, with heavy shelling which detained shipping for some hours, and there were similar attempts at Qantara and Ferdan. In these affairs all four of our ships of war were engaged, together with the French *Requin* and *D'Entrecasteaux*; several torpedo boats and armed launches also gave valuable assistance in each sector.

The Royal Flying Corps in these operations did valuable reconnaissance work over the Turkish lines. The attacking force was estimated at from 12,000 to 15,000 men, with 6 batteries and a 6-inch gun. From prisoners it appeared that the force consisted of parts of the IIIrd, IVth, VIth, and VIIIth Turkish Army Corps, under the personal command of Djemal Pasha. The plan was: under cover of simultaneous attacks in all three sectors, at Qantara, Ferdan, Ismailia, Shaluf, and Suez, so to scatter our force over the long frontage that the enemy would be able to succeed in a main effort to effect a crossing near Tussum in the centre of our front.

On the evening of the 3rd, the 7th and 8th Battalions of the 2nd Brigade Australian Imperial Force arrived; the army defending the Canal became symbolic of a mixed Imperial comradeship in arms; and a spirit came into being which was maintained and increased day by day and month by month throughout the long years of the war, cementing Australian, New Zealand, and home-bred soldiers closely to each other, to their Indian comrades, and to the fighting men from the far ends of the Empire.

On the following day (4th of February) after the above operations, the 92nd Punjabis located some 300 Turks still entrenched on the east bank. As they approached the enemy made signs of surrender but afterwards reopened fire; the

Punjabis, with a detachment of the 128th Pioneers, returned the fire and charged, capturing 6 officers and 251 men with 3 machine guns; 59 men, including a German officer, were found killed. This officer was Major Von der Hagen, the Chief Staff Officer to Djemal Pasha. He had been the driving force of the Turkish operations and did excellent work for his side. Some time afterwards our men erected a good-sized obelisk of stone over his grave on the east bank, neatly fenced in, a striking monument (for all to see who pass through the Canal) alike to a brave soldier and to the chivalry and fair play of our troops.

On the following days the Turkish force retired back into the desert, our patrols keeping closely in touch, gaining a few prisoners and many camels, but our mounted forces were not sufficiently strong or sufficiently well supplied with transport or supported by Horse Artillery to engage in any very effective pursuit, although the evening of the 4th saw the arrival at Ismailia of the Hertfordshire Yeomanry, the 2nd County of London (Westminster Dragoons), and a squadron of the Duke of Lancaster's Own. In the northern sector the enemy retired on the Qatiya Oasis, 30 miles east of the Canal, and all his positions, within our radius of operations, were vacated along the entire front.

Such were the events of the opening phase of a great campaign, omitting a score of minor engagements. General Wilson states in the conclusion of his account of the operations up to the 11th of February 1915: 'All the units engaged proved cool under fire and did their duty in a highly satisfactory manner, the conduct of officers and men being all that could be desired.' It should be noted that the Canal zone passes through desert, and that at this time the troops on the spot, although not often engaged in actual fighting operations, were thinly holding a frontage of some 50 miles, held a year later by about nine divisions. In addition they were heavily employed in field works, trenching, and operations in a dry sand and rock country, under trying climatic conditions. They had besides to carry out monotonous and exhausting patrol duties necessitated by the enemy's attempts at minelaying or to cross the Canal.

It was thought that Djemal Pasha would soon recover from his difficulties and lack of success, reorganize and strengthen

his army for the conquest of Egypt and, profiting by the experiences and hardening which his forces had received, decide on another and more efficiently organized attack. This forecast, however, did not materialize. He still held Sinai, but, as we learned later, his losses had been heavier than we had calculated, while the demoralization of his troops in their retreat across the desert must in any case have caused considerable delay. He had made a serious mistake in boasts and promises of great and overpowering conquest to the people throughout Syria and Palestine, with relative loss of political prestige when the inhabitants saw the return of his broken, depleted, and badly exhausted troops. The political reaction against the Turkish war policy became so evident that a special effort was made to publish explanations to the effect that a mistake had occurred in point of time, that although Allah had willed a victory over Egypt for Turkish arms, it was not intended to take place until a later season. The expedition had been hindered and interrupted by the hand of God, who had put great dust-storms and terrible trials of heat and drought in its way, to delay the success of Moslem arms to the appropriate hour appointed in His arrangements for the Great War.

But whatever were the intentions of the Turk the opening of the British military attack on the Dardanelles in April 1915 changed the whole strategical position. With an enemy established on the Gallipoli Peninsula at the main gateway into the centre of the Turkish power, the Turks had no troops to spare for so distant and difficult an offensive as that against the Suez Canal. Though all through the summer of 1915 there was constant activity on a small scale and in intermittent fashion in Sinai, the centre of interest in the Near East was transferred to Gallipoli and Egypt became rather the base for the forces employed in the attempt to reach Constantinople than the scene of important operations.

In February a small detachment of Gurkhas was sent down the Gulf of Suez to Tor, where, with the garrison of 150 men of the 2nd Battalion of the Egyptian Army, they completely routed and drove off a Turkish force. Occasionally small engagements took place as our patrols intercepted parties of the enemy attempting to reach the Canal with mines, the usual result being a few more Turks taken prisoners or killed. On rare occasions enemies managed to slip through, and in



April a mine was found actually in the Canal fairway, in the northern section, while on the 30th May the S.S. *Tiresias* struck a mine at the south end of the Little Bitter Lake but was not seriously damaged. It became necessary therefore greatly to increase precautions, and a system of hourly patrols between posts and intermediate posts was instituted, implying ceaseless and vigilant observation of the east bank by both night and day over a front of 100 miles. Whenever our troops came into touch with the enemy in any strength it was not found possible to inflict much damage, as beyond 3 or 4 miles from the Canal men and animals became too exhausted to move effectively in the heat through the sand-hills. Meanwhile the Canal traffic continued practically as in time of peace.

Towards the autumn it was evident that there might be trouble in Western Egypt, and possibly as a result serious international religious and political disorders. Sayed Ahmed the Senussi had assumed a hostile attitude towards us, and his people, aroused by Turkish agents, were taking to the warpath. His actions necessitated the withdrawal of the Egyptian frontier post at El Sollum and subsequent military activities on that front.

## CHAPTER IV

### OPERATIONS AGAINST THE SENUSSI

Soon after the outbreak of war between Great Britain and Turkey in 1914, anti-British feeling was stimulated from Tripoli by Nuri Bey, a half-brother of Enver Pasha, and his agents among the tribes on the western frontier of Egypt. Here, in the oases of the desert and on the trade routes, was the principal sphere of the influential Moslem brotherhood known after the name of their first founder as the Senussi. The attitude of the Senussi toward Egypt itself, however, remained friendly, based on close traditions of kindred language, race, and religion. In April 1915 Gaafer, a Germanized Turk, of no mean ability, reached Tripoli with considerable supplies of both arms and money, and gradually a rupture seemed more and more imminent. A few lawless actions of tribesmen along the coast disclosed the fact that their movements were led by a white officer, and a period of quiet which followed was not unmixed with apprehension on the part of our officers responsible for the western areas. At the beginning of November 1915 two of our ships, the *Tara* and *Moorina*, were torpedoed by enemy submarines; the crews, taking to boats, landed safely in Cyrenaica, but were immediately captured and held as prisoners by the Senussi. Their release was at once demanded, but with no result, as the Senussi Sheikh, Sayed Ahmed, denied any knowledge of the occurrence, which he pretended entirely to discredit. Attempts were made through agents to come to some arrangement, but matters had gone too far and all negotiations collapsed. El Sollum, 300 miles west of Alexandria, was shelled by enemy submarines, one Egyptian coastguard cruiser, the *Abbas*, was sunk and another, the *Nur-el-Bahr*, severely damaged. El Sollum, which was the last town of importance on the Egyptian coast and on the frontier of Tripoli, was also attacked from the land side by 'Mohafizia' (Senussi Regulars), coastguards were killed, and the Zawia<sup>1</sup> at Sidi el Barrani (50 miles east of El Sollum) was occupied by over 300 Mohafizia. Sabil, 30 miles to the south-

<sup>1</sup> The Zawia was an old monastery converted into a fort.

east of El Sollum, was also attacked but held by the coastguard force.

A state of war had to be dealt with, and this reckless activity on the western frontier of Egypt threatened the possibility of far more serious outbreaks in Egypt itself, where nationalist propaganda and revolution had been industriously fomented for some time by enemy agents.

The religious influence of the Senussi was very great among the Arabs inhabiting the fringe of oases and cultivation to the west of the Nile, especially in the large and fertile oasis of Bahariya about 200 miles south-west of Cairo where there were over 120,000 restless Arabs. To the public the Canal zone seemed none too safe, and Egypt with its easily excited masses appeared to be in a most dangerous condition. No doubt a serious reverse to our forces, either at the Canal or in the western desert, would have been the proverbial match to the powder.

If such an event was to be avoided prompt and vigorous action was needed, and action was taken. The far western frontier posts were immediately withdrawn on Mersa Matruh, El Sollum and Sidi el Barrani being evacuated on the 23rd of November, and a force strong enough to deal swiftly with the situation was at once concentrated. The railway from Alexandria to Dabaa, 85 miles short of Mersa Matruh, was made safe, providing an alternative line of communication to the sea route, troops were moved to the Wadi Natrun 60 miles south of Alexandria and north-west of Cairo and to the Faiyum, and careful observation and reconnaissance was established over any movement of tribesmen about the Oasis of Moghara. The object was to keep the expected fighting as far from the Nile delta as possible, to show an intention of taking the offensive, to impress the truculent native population in the towns, to protect if loyal, as far as possible, the Bedouins of the coast areas to the west, and if they became disaffected to coerce them into better behaviour. There is no doubt that native opinion in the delta was favourably impressed by our prompt action.

Mersa Matruh, which became the advanced base, is a town and open roadstead about 180 miles west of Alexandria, about 120 miles east of El Sollum and about half that distance east of Sidi el Barrani.

In November 1915 a composite force was formed under the command of Major-General A. Wallace, C.B., the mounted brigade being under Brigadier-General Tyndale-Biscoe, and the infantry commanded by Brigadier-General the Earl of Lucan. Space will not permit of a detailed account of the extraordinary variety of units represented in this force, including troops from India, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. One composite brigade of Yeomanry—we are told in the dispatch—consisted of men from twenty different regiments. The staff had been hastily collected and its members were not well known to each other, but some re-arrangements of units and other improvements were made by the end of January 1916. Eventually the western force became a thoroughly efficient organization and in every way suitable for the work in hand. Shortage of transport limited the number of supply centres, and it was in consequence necessary to withdraw engaged troops after each two or three days' operations.

From December 1915 onwards frequent touch was maintained with the enemy and, whenever this occurred, whether large or small numbers were engaged, our troops inflicted damage with comparatively little loss to themselves. On December 24th a reconnaissance located a force of about 5,000 men near Gebel Medwa about 8 miles south-west of Mersa Matruh, more than half being Regulars with 4 guns and several machine guns, under Gaafer Pasha. On December 25th Major-General Wallace moved from Matruh in two columns, the infantry under Lieutenant-Colonel J. L. R. Gordon, the mounted troops under Brigadier-General Tyndale-Biscoe. The position was soon carried, the action being marked by interesting tactical incidents which showed accurate estimates and prompt decision on the part of the regimental officers, followed by efficient action by all the troops. A number of prisoners and some live stock fell into our hands, and amongst the booty were the personal effects and the office of Gaafer Pasha. About 400 enemy dead were left on the field, and a considerable number of wounded were among those who managed to get away.

As a result of this fight the Senussi leader with his staff and the remainder of his forces beat a hasty retreat. During the first part of January 1916 the weather made active operations on a large scale impossible, but various enemy camps were

raided, a large number of camels and sheep taken, and grain dumps destroyed. On the 19th of January the Senussi was located with a considerable force and about 100 Europeans about 25 miles south and west of Matruh, and on the 23rd General Wallace's force moved again, now including a battalion of the South African Brigade,<sup>1</sup> which had been sent out from England to Egypt, reaching Alexandria in the second week of January. The right column was under Colonel Gordon, the left under Brigadier-General Tyndale-Biscoe. The first troops to engage were a squadron of Australian Light Horse, supported by the Bucks Hussars and horse gunners of the H.A.C. As soon as our infantry, led by the 15th Sikhs, came into action, the mounted troops were enabled to work around the enemy's right flank, which spread over a frontage of about one mile and a half, across open ground with no vestige of cover. At the beginning it was most difficult to ascertain exactly the enemy's positions, and our troops suffered from both artillery and machine-gun fire which was at once rapid and accurate. The enemy was gradually pushed back for about 3 miles without our being able to reach him at close quarters, but eventually we were able to cover both his flanks and shortly afterwards he was obliged to abandon all his positions. Darkness came on and further progress was impossible, for the whole country was a quagmire owing to excessive rains which prevented the full co-operation of the infantry and practically paralysed any movement of transport or of the armoured cars. The night was intensely cold and wet, and as neither blankets nor supplies could be brought up the men suffered severely. It should be noted that in all desert operations it is quite impossible to move infantry in heavy marching order, owing to the heat in the daytime. Men must be lightly clad, and their load restricted to arms, ammunition, and the smallest amount of rations and water that may be safely carried—transport keeping closely in touch. Blankets, great coats, &c., are carried in first-line G.S. wagons or by pack animals.

Our casualties were relatively heavy, 31 killed and 291 wounded, the enemy losses being not less than 200 killed and 500 wounded. This reverse to the enemy, following so closely on that at Gebel Medwa, was a severe blow, and the Senussi already began to feel a loss of faith among his adherents. With

<sup>1</sup> For the South African part in this North African fighting see vol. iv, pp. 471-3.

more favourable weather and ample transport the success obtained would have probably been complete and finished the campaign.

Owing to the severe physical strain of these operations Major-General Wallace, who was now advanced in years, was obliged to relinquish the command of the troops. Major-General W. E. Peyton was appointed as his successor, and took over the command on the 9th of February.

On the 11th of February a considerable hostile force took possession of the Bahariya Oasis, which, as has been said, is 200 miles south-west of Cairo and within 100 miles of the rich and populous districts of Faiyum and Minia. Dakhla farther south also fell into enemy hands. To meet this situation a command was organized under Major-General Sir John Adye, C.B., to take over the defences in the southern provinces of Egypt. Head-quarters were established at Beni Suef on the Nile, south-east of Faiyum, and a thorough system of patrols and bridge guards was set going.

Our operations in the north were now steadily proceeding, sufficient camel transport had been collected to permit of a continuous advance. Moreover, the advance was parallel to the sea coast and operations on land could be and were supplemented from the sea. It had been decided to reoccupy El Sollum, and on February 20th General Peyton dispatched a force under Brigadier-General H. T. Lukin, C.M.G., D.S.O., consisting of a part of his South African Brigade, with the Bucks Hussars, Dorset Yeomanry, the Notts Battery, R.H.A., detachments of the 1/6th Royal Scots, and two field ambulances. General Lukin was to establish himself at Barrani on the way to El Sollum. A considerable hostile force was located at Agagia, 14 miles south-east of Barrani, and information was also received that the Senussi himself, Sayed Ahmed, had gone to Siwa, but that both Nuri Bey and Gaafer Pasha were in the camp.

On the 25th of February our forces were in touch with the enemy, who immediately showed fight. On the following morning our main attack developed, the Yeomanry captured a hill some 4,000 yards from the enemy's position, and this was followed by an advance of the South Africans with Yeomanry and armoured cars on the right flank. The result was as on previous occasions; the enemy attempted a rapid

flank movement against our left which was met by troops in reserve and the counter-attack was checked and thrown back. We had now gained ground to within 500 yards of the enemy's position, and the greater part of our reserves with the armoured cars were thrown into the fight, Colonel Souter with his Dorset Yeomen being held in readiness to take up the pursuit. The enemy was soon forced out of his trenches and the cavalry fight began. Sir John Maxwell's dispatch gives Colonel Souter's account of the Yeomanry action, and it may well be repeated here :

It was my intention to let the enemy get clear of the sand-hills, where there might have been wire or trenches, and then to attack him in the open. I therefore pursued on a line parallel to, and about 1,000 yards west of, the line of retreat, attacking with dismounted fire whenever the horses wanted an easy. About 2 p.m. I saw for the first time the whole retreating force extend for about a mile with a depth of 300 to 400 yards. In front were the camels and baggage escorted by irregulars, with their proper fighting force (Mohafizia) and Maxims forming their rear- and flank-guard. I decided to attack mounted.

The Dorset Regiment was complete, a squadron of the Bucks had gone on ahead.

'The attack was made in two lines, the horses galloping steadily and well in hand. Three Maxims were brought into action against us, but the men were splendidly led by their squadron and troop leaders and their behaviour was admirable. About 50 yards from the position I gave the order to charge, and with a yell the Dorsets hurled themselves upon the enemy, who immediately broke. In the middle of the enemy's lines my horse was killed under me, and, by a curious chance, his dying strides brought me to the ground within a few yards of the Senussi general, Gaafer Pasha.'

Colonel Souter with two Yeomen were alone among some 50 lightly wounded enemy, an awkward situation until the arrival of a machine-gun section. Gaafer and his staff were made prisoners.

Again and again in the campaigns of the Near East we meet with the moral effect of a cavalry force used under conditions favourable for its employment. Colonel Souter adds to his report : 'It is difficult to accurately express the effect of this cavalry charge on the enemy. Throughout the day he had

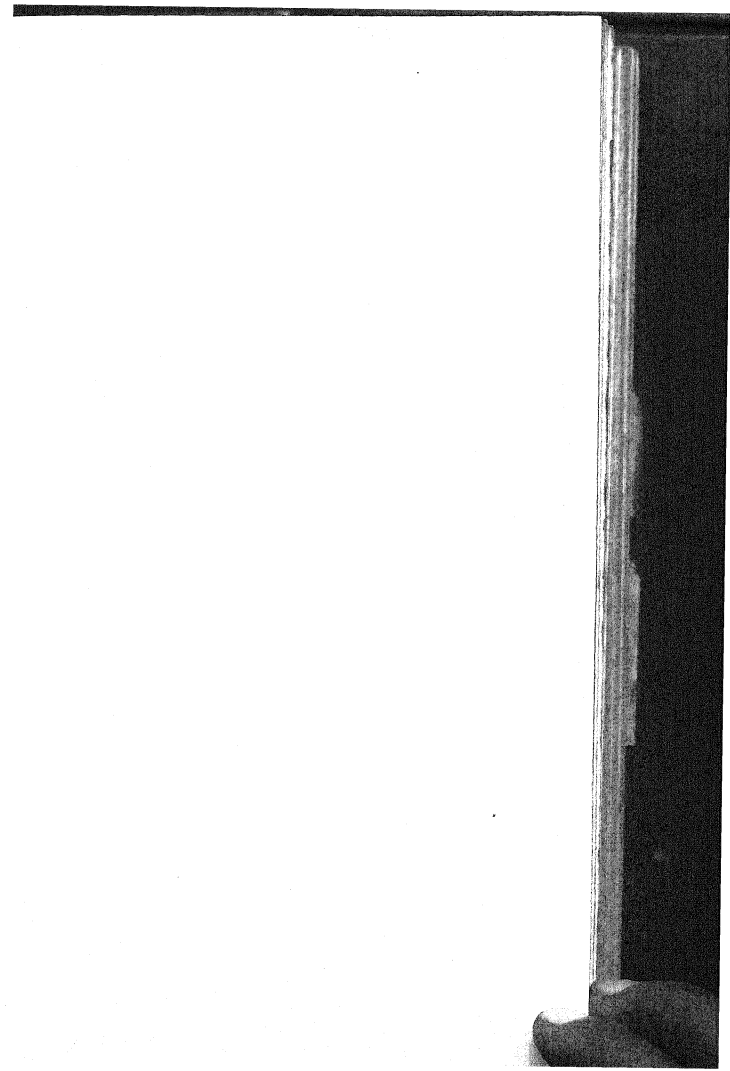
fought with extreme boldness, but when the horses got into him he had only one thought, and that was to get away.'

After this fight at Agagia on the 26th of February Barrani was occupied on the 28th, and the enemy retreated towards El Sollum. At Barrani as the new base the further advance on El Sollum was organized, the whole South African Brigade being brought up, and on the 9th of March a column under General Lukin started again. There were difficulties along the route for want of water, but there was no further fighting; the enemy evacuated El Sollum, and on the 15th it was re-occupied by our troops.

One striking incident must be mentioned to complete this chapter of the western operations. From information gained it appeared that the survivors of the crews of the *Tara* and *Moorina* were to be found some 75 miles west of El Sollum. Their rescue was undertaken by a light armoured car battery under the command of Major the Duke of Westminster. This battery travelled about 120 miles, through unknown country, against an enemy of unknown strength. The rescue was effected without loss, but the exploit demanded resolution and is one of many picturesque deeds of daring not to be forgotten.

Sayed Ahmed had now lost most of his influence, the attitude of native Egypt readjusted itself in our favour, and apprehension of an internal rising passed away.







SIR ARCHIBALD MURRAY

## CHAPTER V

### THE OFFENSIVE DEFENCE

WHILE the operations against the Senussi were still in progress the strategical situation had again undergone a complete change. The decision of the Allies to evacuate the Dardanelles set free the bulk of the Turkish forces for offensive warfare, though the drain on the man-power of Turkey, as appeared later, had been so great as most materially to reduce their capacity to take the initiative. For the moment it seemed that a renewed Turco-German attack on Egypt might be imminent, and once more the problem of the best way to defend the Canal and repel the expected attack became the question of the hour.

To General Sir Archibald Murray belongs the credit of establishing a complete defence system of the Canal zone. With untiring energy he completed the organization and equipment of an offensive that drove the Turkish forces wholly out of Sinai, and if there was any remaining anxiety as to a possible native rising it vanished before his ceaseless efforts and fine soldierly character. Murray arrived at Cairo on January 9th, 1916, and took over from General Monro the command of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, including the Gallipoli Army. The evacuation from Cape Helles had just been completed, and the troops were awaiting at Mudros and Imbros transport to Egypt, where all the force, except the Salonika Army, was being concentrated. That part of the Dardanelles Army which had held Anzac and Suvla Bay had been moved earlier and, with the 53rd (Welsh) Division, was employed on the western frontier under the command of Sir John Maxwell.

Murray's command consisted of all organized troops in Egypt except those immediately employed in the defences of Western Egypt and the Nile valley or in maintaining order in the delta, these troops being known as 'the Force in Egypt'. The limits of jurisdiction were fixed roughly by a line running north and south, 5 miles west of the Canal. Such an arrange-

ment of necessity involved much duplication of administrative work, and in a short time the two forces were combined under one command, as the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, the name and formation of Mediterranean Expeditionary Force being abolished.

It was not till the end of February that the last units of the Dardanelles Army reached Egypt. Ships loaded with troops, guns, animals, and vehicles arrived daily at both Alexandria and Port Said, new units had to be created, brigades, divisions, and corps organizations formed, and all the personnel and material of an army had to be disentangled, sorted out, redistributed, fed, newly clothed, equipped, and staffed. Then followed extensive retraining for the new conditions under which operations were to be carried out.

The enemy's intentions in respect to Egypt were as yet by no means certain. He was believed to have about 250,000 men available for a Syrian campaign, though how far the transport facilities at his disposal would suffice to move even a part of this number was another matter. However, it became a matter of great importance that a more extensive and flexible defence scheme should be at once carried out in the Canal zone. Simultaneously, an ample striking force could now be organized with the additional numbers of troops at our disposal.

Murray's head-quarters were established at Ismailia and became a centre of great activity. The stationary defences were in a backward state, for shortage of piping materials had made it impossible to provide a sufficient water-supply on the east bank, and difficulties of labour had prevented construction of roads and light railways most urgently needed properly to connect up our bridge-heads with a front-line system of outer defences, and to provide lateral communications. None of the works on the east bank were actually garrisoned at this time. The enemy showed no signs of an immediate advance, but none the less all works were hastened towards completion.

The situation was clearly stated in an 'appreciation' issued in the middle of January. The problem of a defence line was shown to differ materially from the problem in France or the Dardanelles. In any advance against our lines the enemy's chief difficulty would be one of water-supply. He must win a substantial victory in two or three days or be obliged to retire. Our new system, as sited, was to consist of three lines

of defence on the east bank of the Canal, variable in depth, but averaging about 11-12,000 yards from the Canal. In the front line it was planned to include all points from which fire could be directed by observation on the Canal. This would prevent the enemy's guns from approaching near enough to interfere with shipping. A second line, about 4-6,000 yards in rear of the first, was provided, which surrendered some high ground, but was sufficiently advanced to deny the enemy any effective shelling of ships. The third line was the original Canal defences as they stood at the beginning of 1916, with certain improvements and additions.

Unlike the lines necessary in France and Belgium, where water is plentiful, the defence lines in Sinai could not be made continuous. They were a series of fortified localities, the garrisons of which varied from a battalion up to a brigade, with its complement of artillery, machine guns, and auxiliary services, and each of which was prepared, manned, and provisioned to resist an enveloping, all-round attack. In siting such strong points due regard was had to the intervening spaces, and it was ensured that they should be wholly swept zones of fire which would be also suitable for the development of counter-strokes, to be carried out by other troops.

In addition to advantageous defence of localities, the lines were planned to resist step by step penetration and to be capable of mutual support. Facilities were provided for movement of reinforcements and many concealed machine-gun positions were built. In the case of a battalion position, continuous fire trenches were not necessary throughout the sector frontage so long as the ground afforded sufficient cover to move freely from flank to flank and all intervals between works could be brought under effective fire. Concealment from enemy's artillery and wire obstacles were ingeniously combined in these works.

Gun emplacements, observation posts, water-tanks, signal stations, ration and ammunition dumps, roads, water-pipes, and the endless details of such a long frontage in rough desert hills and valleys, were worked out and completed with the greatest dispatch, but, while perfecting the defences, Murray at the same time gave close attention to the preparation of an attacking force. Great numbers of riding and transport camels were collected, and the northern route, which was obviously

our best line of advance, was developed as rapidly as possible. Roads, pipe-lines, water-tanks, and other works necessary for the maintenance of a large force went forward, and the great amount of work accomplished in a trying climate may be judged by the fact that in about six months over 250 miles of railway were laid down and in operation, 154 miles of pipe-lines with pumping stations in working order were completed, and 115 miles of metalled roads were built for motor traffic.

The Royal Flying Corps kept a close eye over enemy movements at Bir Hassana, Nekl, and El 'Arish, as the Naval Air Service did on points in Southern Syria, but their reports showed no concentrations for an advance against the Canal. The entry of the Russian Army into Erzerum was said to have called off Djemal's best troops from Syria, and by the end of February 1916 it was estimated that he could not have had more than sixty thousand men available for an attack on the Egyptian front, even if the transport difficulties could have been surmounted. Careful reconnaissance disclosed the fact that for 25 miles to the east, as far as Bir el Nus and Hod Um Ugba, the country was practically deserted.

On the other hand the pressure of the Germans in France called off large bodies of troops from Egypt for that front, and in consequence Murray's army was considerably depleted, though it was still ample for the defence of Egypt. The preparations for an advance by the northern route, however, were not relaxed. Posts were constantly being pushed forward, there was untiring search for water-supply, and the broad-gauge railway was prolonged eastward from Qantara towards Qatiya.

On the 11th of March 1916 Murray was appointed Commander-in-Chief of all the Imperial Forces in Egypt, adding to his army all the troops formerly under the command of General Sir John Maxwell. The unification of command, which actually took effect on the 19th of March, placed all matters of martial law in Egypt, maintenance of order in the Nile valley and delta as well as on the western frontier, under one head. At the request of the Sirdar, Sir Reginald Wingate, Murray's jurisdiction was further extended to the south from Aswan to Halfa.

While the bulk of the Australian and New Zealand Expeditionary Forces went on to France, what now became the

Anzac Mounted Division remained in Egypt. Having them at his disposal together with bodies of Yeomanry and other mounted troops, Murray was strong in cavalry and could contemplate following up the pursuit of the Turks should they again attack and be repulsed.

To a unit of the Anzac Mounted Division, the 9th Australian Light Horse Regiment, belongs the honour of the first offensive enterprise on the Canal front, which took place in the middle of April. A squadron of this regiment with a detachment of the Bikaner Camel Corps was placed under the command of Major W. H. Scott, D.S.O., of the 9th Light Horse. The objective near Jifjaffa was over 50 miles out into the desert hills, where an attack was made on a Turkish post covering well-boring operations. The enemy were cut off, their camp and well-boring apparatus, which had been in use for five months, was destroyed, and 1 Austrian officer with 33 other ranks were captured, together with some considerable correspondence giving valuable information.

During April the hardest fighting yet experienced on this front, though only small forces were engaged, fell to the lot of the Yeomanry. Murray's immediate object was to gain possession of the Qatiya district with its groups of palm groves and wells, where there is sufficient water-supply for a large body of troops. This watered area extends for about 15 miles east and south-east of Qatiya, and once in our possession would be held with a view to permanent occupation as soon as the railway and pipe-line could be brought up.

Qatiya is a road junction on the north-western fringe of the Qatiya Oasis, and 26 miles from Qantara by the direct northern road from Palestine to Egypt. Its oasis was the last large and suitable area which could be occupied as a base by an enemy advancing towards the Canal along the northern route, and once it was safely in our possession the Turk would be without his trump card. On our side it promised to be an excellent advance base for a forward movement on El 'Arish. Bir el Abd, 15 miles farther east, and Bir el Mageibra, 10 miles south-east, were reconnoitred by the Gloucestershire Hussars, with the Bikaner Camel Corps and Worcestershire Yeomanry.

On April 9th a squadron of the Worcestershires at Bir el Abd encountered a strong force of Turks in occupation of a ridge to the north-east, whom they at once attacked and drove

eastward, but were unable to pursue far owing to the heavy going. By the 21st of April the railway had been pushed to a point sufficiently forward to permit of an advance designed to gain and hold the whole of the Qatiya district. As was expected, the enemy made a desperate effort to forestall our move by making a sudden and determined raid in force on Qatiya. The Worcestershire Yeomanry occupied Qatiya itself, two squadrons of the Warwickshires were 3 miles to the south at Hamisah, Brigade head-quarters and the Gloucestershire Yeomanry were at Rumani,  $5\frac{1}{2}$  to 6 miles north-west of Qatiya and about 2 miles nearer to Qantara. This disposition had been made by Brigadier-General Wiggin commanding the 5th Mounted Brigade in order to protect the railway and all survey parties and for reconnaissance eastward, but not with the intention of taking any serious offensive.

In the event of a strong attack it was necessary for this scattered mounted force to retire on Dueidar, 13 miles east of Qantara, or on rail-head, 7 miles north-west of Qatiya and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles behind Rumani, as it was impossible to move a strong infantry force so far forward under two days. A party of Royal Engineers were sent to Oghratina, 7 miles north-east of Qatiya, with a squadron of the Worcestershire Yeomanry, and went into bivouac there on the evening of the 21st followed the next day by another squadron of the same regiment; they were replaced at Qatiya by a squadron of the Gloucestershires pending the arrival of one regiment of the 2nd Australian Light Horse Brigade of the Anzac Mounted Division, who were timed to reach Qatiya on the 24th. The rest of the brigade was due at Qantara on the 23rd. At Qatiya the squadron of Gloucestershires had a fairly good trench system for about 60 rifles around their camp, with some smaller shelters covering the horse lines. On the 22nd aerial reconnaissance disclosed strong bodies of the enemy at Bayud, 15 miles east of Qatiya, and at Mageibra, 10 miles south-east. General Wiggin, after consultation with General Lawrence, G.O.C. No. 3 Section, decided to attack the enemy force at Mageibra the same night, using the two squadrons of Warwickshires and the remaining squadron of Worcestershires. General Wiggin accompanied the column with Lieutenant-Colonel Coventry of the Worcestershires. On arrival at Mageibra they found only a few Turks who were made prisoners, and having destroyed



the camp they returned to Hamisah at about 9 o'clock the next morning.

On this morning, the 23rd, at about 5.30 a.m., the small garrison at Oghratina were heavily attacked; the first onslaught was repulsed, but a more determined attack began at 7 o'clock, the position was carried, and the whole garrison was annihilated. About 9.30 a.m. the garrison at Qatiya was attacked and overwhelmed, and Lieutenant-Colonel Coventry, with a squadron of the Worcestershire Yeomanry, moving towards Qatiya, became involved in the disaster, all but 60 men and 1 officer being either killed or captured. General Wiggin and Colonel Yorke with the remaining force did what could be done against an aggressive enemy estimated at about 2,500 men with 4 guns, and by striking at both flanks obliged the Turks to retire. General Wiggin then retreated on Dueidar by way of Hamisah and Colonel Yorke fell back on Rumani, neither being pursued. In the meantime a Turkish force of about 1,000 attacked an advanced post south of Dueidar, which was held by 100 men of the 5th Battalion Royal Scots Fusiliers under Captain Roberts. Two strong attacks were repulsed before the small garrison was reinforced by two companies of the 4th Battalion under Major Thompson of the same regiment, and soon after midday a counter-attack was launched and the enemy was driven off. The 5th Australian Light Horse Regiment arrived just in time to take up the pursuit.

Three and a half squadrons of Yeomanry and details were lost at Oghratina and Qatiya, but notwithstanding this setback our cavalry continued to patrol the Qatiya district, the infantry posts were strengthened, and the railway was brought up to Rumani.

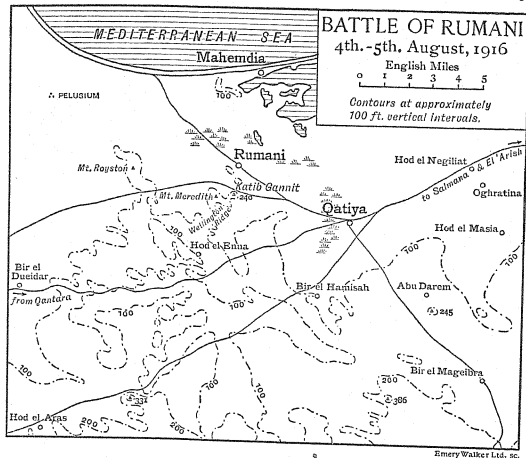
Beyond Qatiya no enemy force was met with until about the 17th of June, when some 2,000 were reported near Mazar, about 67 miles from Qantara. On the 19th a strong body of Turks was found to be moving westward from El 'Arish and establishing a line at Bir el Abd-Jameil-Bayud, a north and south line rather over 10 miles east of Qatiya. At Oghratina the enemy was entrenched in some strength, and other Turkish troops were moving on Mageibra. Murray's policy was to allow the enemy to approach until he became involved in attack on our defences, and meanwhile our cavalry kept in

touch capturing various prisoners, from whom it was learned that this force was the 3rd Turkish Division, consisting of the 31st, 32nd, and 39th Regiments with mountain guns, heavy artillery, and machine-gun companies, and with many Germans and Austrians among the Turks, all the eight machine-gun companies being commanded by Germans. The guns were mountain batteries, with some 4-inch and 6-inch howitzers and anti-aircraft guns, manned by Austrians. A small Arab cavalry force accompanied the column, and other strong bodies of troops followed, at intervals of about one day's march. The machine-gun units, wireless sections, field hospital and supply sections had all been organized and fitted out in Germany for special service with the Turkish Army. The men were in fine physical condition, well equipped, trained, and commanded by a most capable Bavarian officer, Kress von Kressenstein.

In the appendix to this chapter is given a translation of instructions issued to the column which show the thoroughly efficient manner in which the problem of this desert march for an attack on our positions at Qatiya and Rumani had been worked out, every detail having been carefully considered and being clearly stated. The last part of the instructions is interesting in view of the development of 'camouflage' in France and Flanders. Turkish 'Simili Camps' were often very deceiving to our airmen, for a conical hole dug in light-coloured sand under conditions of bright sunlight gives precisely the same shadow as a bell tent above ground, except that no cast shadow of the tent shows by the side of the conical shadow. A fairly good substitute for the cast shadow was produced by digging up the sand roughly to a shape similar to what a cast shadow would be. Photographed from the air the delusion was quite successful.

The enterprise of von Kressenstein in this march deserves credit. He showed admirable ability and foresight, his men were well trained and disciplined soldiers and well officered. General Murray's handling of the problem, steady British infantry, and daring and enduring cavalry gave us the victory, but the Turkish infantry fought skilfully, bravely, and with splendid dash, and this battle, the largest action of the desert campaign, showed mettle on both sides. Badly hammered and suffering heavy losses in killed, wounded, and prisoners,

von Kressenstein got safely away with most of his guns, and although we were far superior in strength of mounted troops, our men and horses were too exhausted to turn the victory into a complete rout. The retirement of the Turkish force on El 'Arish in excellent order was in striking contrast to the haphazard retreat back to Palestine of Djemal Pasha's troops after their attempts to cross the Canal in the previous year. That bitter adventure taught the Turkish Staff the necessity



for better organization, and no doubt gave von Kressenstein his chance to prove the superiority of German over Turkish methods of warfare. But the defeat was a hard blow to the Turkish Syrian Army, and after Rumani and Qatiya they gave up further hope of gaining the Canal or Egypt.

It is somewhat difficult to make clear by narrative of events exactly what took place at the battle of Rumani and Qatiya. We have to bear in mind the railway line extending eastward from the Canal, some miles south of and running parallel to the Mediterranean coast. In shape it swings forward through rolling sand-dunes like the letter 'S' pulled out nearly straight for the first half, the final swing being a curve to the south,

ending at Rumani. Some  $5\frac{1}{2}$  miles farther on south by east is Qatiya. Running westward from the then rail-head at Rumani is a group of high, steep sand-hills and ridges, the first being Katib Gannit Hill, then a group, called Wellington Ridge, continuing westward for about 3 miles to Mount Meredith, which stands forward to the south. The railway's final 'S' hook is about 8 miles across, from Pelusium on the north-west to Rumani at the end of the curve. In about the middle of the area enclosed on the north by the railway curve, and on the south by Katib Gannit, Wellington Ridge and Mount Meredith, stands Mount Royston.<sup>1</sup>

The enemy had established himself in a series of entrenchments covering positions extending from Negiliat through Oghratina to Hod el Masia—occupied in strength of about 5,000 men, and supported by bodies of about 1,000 each at Bir Abu Afein and Bir el Abd in rear of his right flank. On his left about 3,000 troops were disposed in a series of strong works about Mageibra with connecting posts northward to Masia.

Kressenstein's intentions had not been disclosed by July 22nd, but it was evident that he designed either a strong attack on the Qatiya district or another attack on the Canal defences. The only remaining supposition was that he proposed to establish himself across the northern route so as to deny our forces any further advance and to protect his own lines of communication between Syria, the Hejaz, and Southern Sinai.

On this situation General Murray decided to give battle as soon as possible in the hope of inflicting a decisive defeat on the enemy. Such a move to be sure of success had to be well organized and prepared. Some 15 miles of heavy sandy desert stood between the two armies, and to cross it with a force strong enough to strike a stunning blow would require accumulation of camel transport on a very large scale. Immediate steps were taken to this end, while at the same time cavalry contact with the enemy was maintained. Everything pointed to an energetic offensive movement on our part at the earliest day possible. An effective striking force with ample pack transport was rapidly being collected and a plan of operations evolved, Major-General the Hon. H. H. Lawrence being placed

<sup>1</sup> Mount Royston and Mount Meredith were named after Brigadier-General J. R. Royston and Lieutenant-Colonel J. B. Meredith, Australian Light Horse; and Wellington Ridge was so named after the Wellington (N.Z.) Mounted Rifles.

in command. By the 3rd of August everything would be ready, and the final effort was to take place on the date of the full moon (August 13th) unless Kressenstein should attack before that day. Kressenstein decided to forestall our move and attack from his side of the zone of sand, and on the night of the 27th July he pushed forward all along the line. On his right he gained ground but slowly, being hotly opposed by the Canterbury Mounted Rifles. On his left he made progress, swinging his line round by Mageibra to Abu Darem. Then for a few days he delayed attack, constantly being reinforced and strengthening his new positions. By the 31st of July his preparations were completed, although during the last two days he was badly harassed by bombing raids carried out by the Royal Flying Corps, while our Monitors lying at Mahemdia on the coast continuously shelled the enemy camps. About this time, too, Lieutenant-Colonel C. L. Smith, V.C., had begun to worry his left flank with a mobile column of Imperial Camel Corps.

A series of strong British posts extended southward from the sea to a point east of Katib Gannit curving backward like the letter 'J' around the southern slope. On the 2nd of August one or two sharp brushes with mounted troops indicated reconnaissance in some force on the enemy's part, but the general situation was unchanged. On the 3rd Kressenstein disclosed his intention of giving battle by a decided move forward around Qatiya and Hamisah with the object of a holding attack on the Rumani-Mahemdia position (straight part of the letter 'J') to be followed by a main attack against the Katib Gannit line from the south which would penetrate the sand-dunes west of Rumani and thrust at our lines of communication.

General Murray's dispatch gives a vivid description of this stroke as it developed on the night of the 3rd-4th August :

'This outpost line formed by two regiments was attacked by the enemy in increasing strength from midnight onwards. Several attempts to force the line were repulsed, a bayonet charge on Mount Meredith, a high sand-dune midway between Katib Gannit and Hod el Enna, being beaten off between 2 and 3 a.m. The continuous pressure of the enemy gradually forced back the outpost line, which by 4.20 a.m. was facing generally south along the dune called Wellington Ridge between Mount Meredith and Katib Gannit. Before long the

enemy's threat to outflank our right made it necessary to retire slowly northwards towards the railway. It was evident by daylight that the enemy had committed his troops to a decisive attack, as he was pressing the line of fortified works from the east under cover of artillery fire from field guns and heavy howitzers at the same time as he was moving round the southern flank of the position with strong forces, before which our cavalry, while stubbornly resisting, were slowly retiring.'

It had been anticipated that a quick and decisive counter-attack would do great damage once the force of this southern attack had spent itself, and General Lawrence had all the available troops ready to deliver such a blow towards Mount Royston. A mounted brigade was to move from Dueidar, another towards Hod el Aras, and Colonel Smith's mobile column was to fall on the enemy's left rear towards Mageibra. During the day, on the 4th, the enemy launched several determined attacks from the east and south-east with heavy artillery fire, but our troops showed great steadiness although the casualties from the enemy's guns were at some points severe. The Scottish and Welsh infantry repulsed several attacks, but owing to the difficulty of moving up infantry reinforcements through heavy sand the brunt of the fighting on the 4th until late in the afternoon fell upon the cavalry. One squadron held off attacks from the south-east for three hours before a Yeomanry regiment came into touch and relieved the pressure. About 1 o'clock the New Zealanders and Yeomanry pushed a very determined counter-attack at Mount Royston which occasioned a general forward movement of cavalry, and at about 3.30 p.m. two battalions of the East Lancashire Regiment followed by a third were beginning to come up, all troops being ordered to press the counter-attack on Mount Royston and Wellington Ridge. At 6.30 Mount Royston with some 500 prisoners, a battery of mountain artillery, and several machine guns fell into our hands, but the attack on Wellington Ridge, which was very strongly held, was delayed by darkness, and the greater part of the ridge had to be left for the night in the enemy's possession. The result of the day's fighting had been highly satisfactory. We had repulsed the enemy's most determined attacks, captured nearly 1,000 prisoners, and retaken both Mount Royston and a portion of Wellington Ridge. The situation was even more satisfactory in that we had new keen troops to throw

against an enemy now plainly showing signs of serious exhaustion. During the night further moves of cavalry took place in preparation for pursuit. 'Vigorous action to the utmost limit of endurance was ordered for the next day, and the troops, in spite of the heat, responded nobly', runs General Murray's dispatch. The present writer had had no small experience of heat for many years in tropical countries, inclusive of three summers in desert campaigns, and had never experienced such overpowering, suffocating heat as that of the first week of August 1916. The intense heat under which the fighting took place among blinding sand-dunes on the 3rd, 4th, and 5th is almost impossible to describe. The nights, on the other hand, were bitterly cold and damp; while the mornings brought a steaming stifle of vapours in which humidity pressed down in almost overpowering force. Short water, short rations, long marches, and long thirsty hungry delays, heavy loads of equipment, ammunition, trenching tools and arms, added to the already great obstacles of soft sand, precipitous dunes, and puzzling topography, and under such conditions the movement of our infantry never ceases to be a marvel to all who witnessed those days of desert fighting. Equally marvellous was the endurance of the mounted men. Some units were forty or even sixty hours without water for either horse or man; they not only carried on, they rushed on at a gallop, hour after hour, until it was almost past understanding how human beings could so endure. The heroism was matched by the picturesqueness of the setting, and amid all the din and bloodshed it came to mind that over this same battle-field travelled the Holy Family in the flight to Egypt, by these same wells they camped with the Child of Peace, and over these same parched sands they struggled from hill to hill in their journey towards safety and rest.

At daybreak on the 5th the Scottish Territorial infantry, the 52nd (Lowland) Division, backed by Australian and New Zealand mounted troops, took the remainder of Wellington Ridge, capturing over 1,500 prisoners. The tide of battle had turned, prisoners had begun to pour in, and it was now clear that von Kressenstein's daring offensive was in spite of carefully prepared plans and highly organized forces doomed to defeat.

An advance was ordered, and General Chauvel's cavalry pushed on to the very limit of their resources. At Hamisah the Australians caught another 500 prisoners, many machine

guns, and other booty. The advance was then for a time checked by weight of the enemy's guns. To the north the Turkish rear-guard put up a stiff opposition around Qatiya, and darkness found our troops facing the Turks on parallel lines. The enemy were now in full retreat throughout the line, much harassed during the day by the bombs of the Royal Flying Corps, and by the morning of the 6th the Qatiya district had been evacuated and the Turks had fallen back on their original line. The cavalry and Imperial Camel Corps continued to harass their movements, fighting went on at intervals for the next two days, and on the 10th and 12th the enemy moved away from Bir el Abd, Salmana, and other points so rapidly that, owing to difficulties of maintaining supply, we were obliged to abandon further pursuit.

The result of the fighting was a complete defeat of von Kressenstein's force of some 18,000 men. Four thousand prisoners, including 50 officers, were captured, and the total enemy casualties were estimated at about 9,000. Guns, machine guns, rifles, ammunition, horses, mules and camels, stores of various kinds, field hospitals, fell into our hands. General Murray concludes his account with a tribute of appreciation to each of the different classes of troops engaged, and of the overseas forces he says: 'The brunt of the fighting fell upon the Australian and New Zealand mounted troops, to which were attached batteries of R.H.A. I cannot speak too highly of the gallantry, steadfastness and untiring energy shown by these fine troops throughout the operations.' These troops were in constant touch with the enemy from July 19th till August 12th during terrific heat by day and through sleepless nights of outposts and marches. Rumani, though a small action in a war fought on so great a scale, had an importance out of all proportion to the numbers engaged, for at Rumani the Kaiser's dream of severing the 'jugular vein of the British Empire' vanished. It proved the soundness of General Murray's views as to going out to meet the enemy on ground which he must possess from which to strike the Canal, and with Rumani and Qatiya safely in our hands we could force any advancing enemy to meet us on positions of our own choosing.

Reconnaissance and patrol is the story of the month following the battle. No operations of any account took place, except a successful attack on Mazar, which obliged the enemy to evacuate that position and withdraw to camps around El 'Arish.



## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER V

*Extract from Translation of Turkish Orders by Major-General  
Kress von Kressenstein (July 1916)*

## MILITARY

*General Orders. Infantry and Machine Guns :*

(1) I expect every officer of whatever grade to give an example of courage to his subordinates. I expect the rank and file to show the superiority of Turks to British Troops as their comrades have done at Gallipoli and Iraq.

(2) Men are to make all possible use of entrenching tools and sandbags during attack and defence.

(3) Since a continuous supply of Small Arms Ammunition cannot be effected, great economy is to be observed in its expenditure ; consequently both in attack and defence fire must be opened only at short ranges.

(4) Flanking detachments must exercise the utmost vigilance against flank attacks. Owing to the enemy's great strength in cavalry, great vigilance is imperative ; on this account, unsupported wings must dig in as deeply as possible.

(5) The effect of the enemy's fire on our firing-line must be communicated to the neighbouring Artillery and Machine-Gun Officers who are ordered to support our firing-line. If the firing-line is not so supported, the effect of the enemy's fire is to be communicated to the O.C. Infantry for transmission to the Artillery and Machine-Gun Companies so that the effect of the enemy's fire may be countered by Artillery or Machine-Gun assistance to our troops.

(6) Infantry must be provided with pistols, flares and red signalling flags. Our Artillery will thus be better enabled to lengthen their ranges.

(7) Our own positions must be indicated by triangular red cloths in wooden frames, which, however, must not be visible to the enemy.

(8) Owing to the close nature of the country and the frequency of mist (haze) in the morning, constant communication must be kept up with the first line, to avoid accidents from the fire of our own guns.

(9) Two Medjidies for every soldier bringing in an enemy rifle.

## CAVALRY

(1) In close country with many hills and obstacles our reconnaissance will have a good opportunity of observing the enemy's movements and camps, beginning with his actual front(?). £T5.0.0. reward for valuable information about the enemy.

(2) Reconnoitring parties must do all in their power to capture prisoners. £T5.0.0. reward per head.

(3) As there is no cavalry, reconnaissance will be carried out under the direction of mounted officers by Bedouins attached to them.

#### ARTILLERY

(1) In the case of entrenched positions the Turkish Mountain Guns firing Austrian Mountain Gun Shells are to be used against moving (movable) targets in the enemy's lines, while the German Heavy Guns are to be employed against their entrenched positions.

(2) As shell is scarce and can only be replaced with great difficulty, great economy is to be displayed by the Artillery.

(3) Among the chief duties of O.C. Batteries will be the choice of observation stations ; with this object, when required the O.C. Battery will leave his Battery and observe fearlessly, keeping up communication with his Battery by telephone over the intervening space.

(4) To prevent dust caused by discharge betraying gun positions, mats are to be spread under the muzzle of each gun.

(5) During prolonged infantry encounters, O.C.'s Infantry units will send officers to observe the effect of the Turkish Mountain Batteries and Austrian Shells on the enemy's firing line.

#### ORDERS FOR ADVANCE FROM EL 'ARISH

(1) The regulations regarding the march have been explained in previous orders.

(2) Fresh orders will be issued to the advance guard on reaching the line : Oghratina-Hod el Masia-Mageibra, and to the detachment proceeding to Bir el Abd.

The orders issued on July 8th, 1916, refer to the advance from El 'Arish.

#### THE MARCH

(1) The march under war conditions commences from El 'Arish, i.e. it being probable that hostile reconnaissance will be encountered, the advance must be effected with the necessary screen.

There being a Turkish detachment at Bir el Mazar, up to this point (only) ordinary precautions need be observed.

From Bir el Mazar the War Zone commences. From this point it is necessary to separate the advance-guard and main body and send reconnoitring detachments ahead of the advance-guard.

(2) Silence is to be strictly observed on the march. Special attention must be paid to this by troops moving along the shore.

Orders must be given quietly during night marches. No

smoking at night and no use to be made, if possible, of electric torches after Bir el Mazar.

(3) It is probable that units moving along the shore may be exposed to the fire of enemy ships. In this event troops will take to the nearest cover in an ordered manner without waiting for orders.

(4) Every precaution must be taken to facilitate the march, e. g. collars, shirts, head covering, &c., to be opened, boots to be removed.

To prevent confusion among the units on the march, the interval by day must be increased to 100 metres. Files must be opened to give the men air. They must be closed at night and straggling stopped immediately.

To take advantage of the cool nights to cover long distances halts must be shortened. As a rule the troops will march between 6 and 7 p.m. till 11 p.m.

After every 100 minutes' marching troops to halt 20 minutes. Men and animals to be given a breather (*soluk molasi*) after passing through difficult ground.

(5) Draught oxen to be watered at every watering-place.

(6) In difficult ground where guns and carts cannot be moved by the teams, they will have to be hauled by guy ropes attached to the wheels. When planks have been laid down the assistance of men for hauling is necessary.

It is every C.O.'s duty and 'his honour' (*sheref*) to render the maximum assistance to guns and carts in difficult ground.

On such ground, limbers and carts will have to be emptied if necessary.

Infantry must assist artillery in the above manner.

Artillery Officers must inform Infantry Officers of the extent of their requirements in men for haulage, and Infantry Officers must obey instructions under this head issued by their C.O. or by Artillery Officers.

#### INSTRUCTIONS

(1) In order to minimize the results of aeroplane bombs when in camps, [tents] are to be separated and distributed over a considerable area; men, animals, and transport to be divided into small groups.

(2) As enemy aircraft are likely to fly above our camps between 4 a.m. and 7 a.m. and between 5 and 7 p.m. and take our tents as targets, on the approach of enemy aircraft being reported, troops will disperse in small groups, which are then to remain stationary, for some hundreds of yards away from the centre of the camp.

O.C.'s are to select positions for Infantry and Machine-Gun fire and against aircraft attacking camps.

No other units, except those detailed for the purpose, are to

fire on an enemy aircraft, and Machine-Gun and Infantry fire is not to be employed against aeroplanes flying very high.

(3) All existing means, and any which can be improvised, are to be employed to protect [men] against the sun, and measures must be taken to meet cases in which tents are insufficient.

(4) As far as Bir el Mazar, the covering troops must be strengthened and precautions organized against surprise.

Patrols and sentries must be posted during daylight on all dominating points, and Bedouin Camel Scouts sent out to observe enemy's movements and report in time to O.C.

In case of surprise the [situation of the] rallying points fixed must be carefully kept in mind.

These positions must be shown to Officers who are second-in-command (assistant C.O.'s) and must be defensibly organized.

(5) To avoid discovery by enemy aircraft, tents are to be covered with earth, mud, scrub, &c.

(6) Near camps, 'Simili Camps' (dummy camps) are to be pitched in order to attract the attention of aircraft. Holes are to be dug in the earth to simulate camps (tents).

(7) When troops are resting, a few sentries are to be posted, the better to protect their repose.

(8) In order to mark the whereabouts of O.C.'s and other high officers, special indications must be placed on their quarters (tents).

(9) In cases where detachments are separated by a considerable distance, roads are to be indicated by simple signs.

(10) On enemy aeroplanes coming in sight all ranks will lie down and will try to bury themselves in the sand, in order to avoid fragments of bomb.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE EASTWARD MOVE

DURING the last quarter of 1916 no important fighting took place until just before Christmas week. The railway was steadily carried forward, by the end of October it was nearly up to Bir Salmana, 45 miles from the Canal, and in December it had grown another 23 miles, bringing it up to Mazar. The great difficulty of 1916 had been the lack of an adequate water supply for the troops. With mounted troops water was always the controlling factor, and for some time water was brought up by rail in tank trucks and stored at railway sidings. In due course the pipe-line reached Rumani, and while our advanced troops were operating in the waterless country beyond Qatiya large reserves of water were accumulated at the rail-head.

In October the command of the eastern force with the Ismailia head-quarters was taken over by Sir Charles Dobell.<sup>1</sup> General Murray was thereby relieved of many details, and enabled to move his General Head-quarters (as General Officer Commanding in Chief) to Cairo, where he was more closely in touch with the civil authority.

The water difficulty was of such proportions that an advance on El 'Arish, nearly 100 miles distant from the Canal at Qantara, could not be undertaken until the 20th of December, enabling the Turks to withdraw all their forces before our arrival at that place on the 21st. An enemy force, then thought to be the El 'Arish garrison, having been located at Maghdaba, some 20 miles to the south of El 'Arish on the Wadi el 'Arish, a flying column under the command of Major-General Chauvel, and consisting of Australian and New Zealand mounted troops with the Imperial Camel Corps, started to attack on the night of the 22nd/23rd December. Making a night march they engaged the enemy at 9 o'clock on the morning of the 23rd. Parts of the force were sent around to come in from the east and south, while the direct attack was made by the Imperial Camel Corps, advancing rapidly from the north-west. Soon

<sup>1</sup> For Sir Charles Dobell see vol. iv, part i, especially pp. 74 and 116.

after midday the position was practically surrounded, but it was found most difficult to make further progress. Unless Maghdaba fell the force would be obliged to withdraw, as none of the horses had been watered since the previous evening, and no water could be found outside the enemy's position nearer than El 'Arish. Just when retreat seemed inevitable the Australians, by a daring stroke, captured an enemy work on the west bank of the wadi, taking over 100 prisoners. Shortly afterwards two Australian Light Horse regiments pushed on to within 200 yards of the enemy's line on the north-west, keeping in close touch with the Imperial Camel Corps on that side. On the south another regiment of light horsemen pressed heavily, and the New Zealanders had gained ground to within 600 yards on the east. As the pressure increased the Camel Corps, followed by the Australians, penetrated the second line, and one of the main redoubts was taken with 130 prisoners, including the Turkish commander. The light horsemen from the southern frontage then charged mounted with fixed bayonets, and by half-past four the whole position with its garrison was in our hands. This fine action cost the Turks some 1,300 prisoners besides many killed and a considerable quantity of stores. It need scarcely be added that our troops lost no time in making use of the water which Maghdaba provided.

The last Turkish garrison in Northern Sinai was now at Rafah, 28 miles east of El 'Arish and formerly the Egyptian police post at the Palestine frontier, just where the coast roads meet those from Hebron and Beersheba. Here the frontier is marked by a group of three marble columns on a ridge some 5 miles inland. Rafah is well on to the rising fertile ground of Southern Palestine, and for a part of the year, but a part of the year only, all the lands for miles around are covered with rich fields of barley and other crops, farmed by Bedouins. The main ridge of hills running east and west for about one mile on the Egyptian side of the line is called Magruntein, and a little to the south on rolling downs is the road from Beersheba into Egypt, where is an ancient graveyard said to have been the site of a camping ground occupied by the Holy Family. On Magruntein Hill the Turks had an excellent trench system occupied by a detached garrison, which was within striking distance of our mounted

troops. In January 1917 General Murray decided to repeat, if possible, at Magruntein the Maghdaba success ; the operations were placed in the hands of Lieutenant-General Sir Philip Chetwode, who early in December had taken over command of what was known as the Desert Column, and a swift surprise march culminated on January 9th in completely surrounding the position.

Magruntein Hill was slightly over a mile from Rafah, the Turkish works faced in every direction, with a central redoubt dominating the whole position ; all the surrounding ground was open and afforded practically no cover for approach. Magruntein, therefore, was a hard nut to crack. The fight lasted for ten hours from all sides, the main general attack developed in the afternoon, before 5 o'clock the New Zealand Mounted Rifles captured the redoubt, thus taking in reverse the lower-lying works, within another hour the fighting was over, and the position with all its garrison fell into our hands, 1,600 unwounded prisoners being taken. During the progress of the action a relieving force approached from the direction of Shellal, but was driven off without difficulty.

General Murray in his dispatch expresses his great debt to General Dobell and his staff for their success during this period of rapid advance. For two years the province of Sinai had been in the enemy's hands, and now, with the exception of a few scattered patrols, no Turk could be found west of the Palestine frontier. The destruction of Maghdaba opened the way for us to strike their southern line of communication. They lost no time in withdrawing from Hassana and Nekl in the south, while the victory at Magruntein drove them finally over the frontier.

'To regain this peninsula, the true frontier of Egypt, hundreds of miles of road and railway had been built, hundreds of miles of water-piping had been laid, filters capable of supplying 1,500,000 gallons of water a day, and reservoirs had been installed, and tons of stone transported from distant quarries. Qantara had been transformed from a small canal village into an important railway and water terminus, with wharves and cranes and a railway ferry ; and the desert, till then almost destitute of human habitation, showed the successive marks of our advance in the shape of strong positions firmly entrenched and protected by hundreds of miles of barbed wire, of standing camps where troops could shelter in

comfortable huts, of tanks and reservoirs, of railway stations and sidings, of aerodromes and of signal stations and wireless installations, by all of which the desert was subdued and made habitable, and adequate lines of communication established between the advancing troops and their ever-receding base. Moreover, not only had British troops laboured incessantly through the summer and autumn, but the body of organized native labour had grown. The necessity of combining the protection and maintenance, including the important work of sanitation, of this large force of workers, British and native, with that steady progress on the railway, roads, and pipes which was vital to the success of my operations, put the severest strain upon all energies and resources. But the problem of feeding the workers without starving the work was solved by the goodwill and energy of all concerned.'—(General Murray's dispatch, 1st March 1917.)

On the western frontier of Egypt the sweeping up process had continued. The Senussi, Sayed Ahmed, left the Bahariya Oasis in October 1916, retiring west to Siwa, and all the oases between Siwa and the Nile were completely pacified. In January 1917 operations were begun with a view to capturing the Senussi Sheikh by a quick move to Siwa from Matruh. This involved the crossing of 200 miles of waterless desert. A column of armoured motor cars was sent south in command of Brigadier-General H. W. Hodgson, who on February 3rd and 4th managed to intercept the enemy at Girba, a short distance west of Siwa, inflicting some 250 casualties on a force of about 850. Sayed Ahmed himself managed to escape to Jaghub, but Siwa was entered and the work of clearing Egypt of enemies on all fronts was rendered complete. The outstanding feature of all the operations on this western front, with harder ground than on the east, was the work of the armoured cars, whose 'range of action', wrote General Murray, 'is far beyond that of any troops mounted on horses or camels'.

As has been stated, most of the caravan routes between Palestine and Egypt converge on Rafah, and from that point radiate eastward into South Palestine. One group of roads keeps to the plains and follows the coast northward toward Gaza and on to Jaffa, others go into the foot-hills and others again swing south and east towards Beersheba and on to the Judean Hills. To-day travellers are carried by the excellent double track State railway to Rafah junction, where the line



divides, one railway following the coast-line through Khan Yunis, between 4 and 5 miles east of Rafah, then through Deir el Balah and Gaza into the middle of the rich fruit and vine lands of the Jaffa district, while the other bears to the right past Abasan and Beni Sela to Shellal, where it crosses the wild broken valley of the Wadi Shellal on to the plateau of Amr and Karm. From Karm the line swings to the south and east again to Irqaiyiq. Joining at Irqaiyiq the line which runs northward from Beersheba, skirting the hills, it goes through Sheri'a—the Geria or Gerar where Abraham kept his flocks, where Sarah practised politics on the king, and where Isaac and Rebecca figured later—and running northward to Junction, where the double track begins again, continues to Lydda. From Lydda the line climbs through cuttings and over valleys in a south-easterly direction through the hills to Jerusalem. The building of this railway during the campaign has brought untold blessings and prosperity to a large and well-peopled area of rich agricultural lands. It has created new channels of commerce and opened to the world the 'Land of Milk and Honey'. Heavy loads go up by the coastal route, the trains being laden with merchandise for the traders of Palestine, while the empty trucks come down by the hill route, picking up produce on their way back for the markets of Egypt or for export east and west from Port Said. The railway was built, as a military measure, to serve the army, but it follows the best route for peace development and is the greatest monument to our campaign in the Near East.

As a result of our victory at Rafah the enemy's next strong position became the centre of interest. Weli Sheikh Nuran in a large group of rolling hills to the west and south of the Wadi Shellal had been developed into a strong defensive position, behind which the enemy began rapidly to concentrate his forces. The position was intended to cover his lines of communication between Gaza and Beersheba as well as to protect the Turkish railways and the Beersheba-Hebron road to Jerusalem.

A great amount of trenching and wiring was put into the Sheikh Nuran position. All the way across Sinai, through Palestine and Syria to Aleppo, the trenches dug by the Turkish Army were a record of industry and enterprise. The Turkish infantry soldier is a fine digger as well as a game fighter, and

how many miles of trenches were ably and cheerfully constructed, what millions of cubic yards were moved in those three or four years of war, has never been told. Excellent and extensive trench systems defended Gaza, and the strong line of Huj, Atawineh, Sheri'a, and Irqaiyiq continuing south-east to the Beersheba system, was planned by General Liman von Sanders, who had so ably organized the defences of Gallipoli and the Dardanelles.

On our side during February 1917 the railway was in spite of great difficulties pushed forward, the El 'Arish position was improved, and all the country to the east as far as Rafah was kept by our horsemen under complete observation and patrol. The New Zealanders and other mounted troops manœuvred the enemy out of Khan Yunis by the end of the month. Preparations were well forward to attack the enemy at Sheikh Nuran, where he had been working incessantly since the beginning of January; but, as stated above, this group of hills, so well fortified, lies south of the Wadi Shellal and, with very broken ground in their rear, the Turks were in some danger of being outflanked or cut off, in view of our superior strength in mounted troops, especially as we were now in possession of Khan Yunis near the coast and pressing forward towards the enemy's right flank position on the sea. His strong line from Gaza on the Mediterranean to Beersheba was some miles farther back. Aeroplane reconnaissance showed his intention of retiring from Sheikh Nuran, and every effort was made to forestall this move, to prevent, if possible, evacuation, in any case to inflict loss while a move was being attempted. The Royal Flying Corps was ordered to carry out to the utmost bomb attacks against his communications, with the result that vigorous raids were made on Beersheba, Sheri'a, and Junction on the Ramle-Jerusalem railway line, but, owing to the great distance from rail-head to Sheikh Nuran, it was found impossible for either infantry or mounted troops to make any effective stroke before the Turks had retired across the Wadi Shellal and were safely out of reach. The two Turkish divisions which had garrisoned Sheikh Nuran, after retirement, were added to their main defence line and were distributed between Gaza and Sheri'a, a few being sent to Beersheba.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE FIRST AND SECOND BATTLES OF GAZA

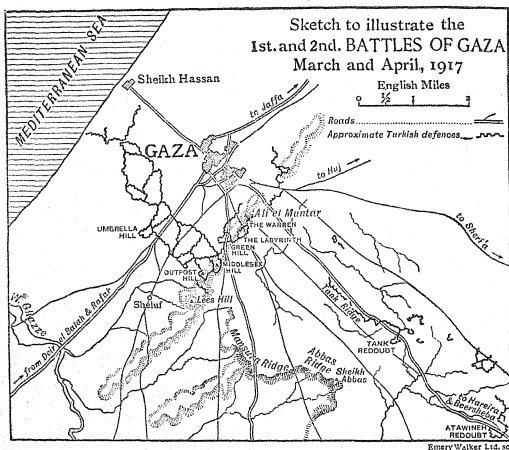
GENERAL MURRAY's problem now became rather difficult, owing to uncertainty as to where on a wide frontage the enemy would be likely to make his principal stand. An attack on Beersheba, the enemy's extreme left, at this moment, would have meant diverting our lines of communication, which had so far followed the coast, to the south and carrying them parallel to the Turkish front. The coast route still seemed preferable as the railway could be more rapidly extended on that line owing to absence of gradients. Accordingly it was decided as soon as adequate communications could be established to attack the right flank of the Turks at Gaza.

By the middle of March the railway had reached Rafah, where sidings and supply depots were fast assuming the necessary proportions for a big move. Transport arrangements were completed for three infantry and two cavalry divisions. The Desert Column was reorganized into two cavalry divisions, viz. the Anzac Mounted Division and the Imperial Mounted Division,<sup>1</sup> and one infantry division, the 53rd (Welsh), with some light armoured-car batteries, and was between Rafah and Sheikh Zowaiid, 12 miles from Rafah on the El 'Arish road. The 52nd Infantry Division was at Sheikh Zowaiid, and the 54th Infantry Division between Sheikh Zowaiid and El 'Arish. On the 20th of March the head-quarters of the Desert Column were moved forward from Sheikh Zowaiid to Rafah, and at Rafah General Dobell established his head-quarters.

It seemed probable on the information received that the enemy proposed to withdraw from the Gaza-Sheri'a-Beersheba line without showing fight. Accordingly General Murray determined that it would be best to engage him without delay in the hope of a decisive victory. It was also necessary to take and occupy the Wadi Ghazze (a wide valley running across the

<sup>1</sup> The Imperial Mounted Division was composed of two Yeomanry brigades and one Australian Light Horse brigade with T.F. Royal Horse Artillery.

enemy's front) in order to cover the further advance of the railway from Rafah. With this object the Desert Column was again moved forward and concentrated at Deir el Balah,<sup>1</sup> a small village south of the Wadi Ghazze, 8 miles south-west of Gaza, and near the sea. This was followed by the 54th Division moving in support to Khan Yunis, about half-way between Rafah and Balah. The Camel Corps concentrated at Abasan, about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles south-east of Khan Yunis. It should be noted



that east of Rafah and within the Palestine border, scattered villages are plentiful, in strong contrast to the desert wastes of Sinai.

In the early morning hours of the 26th of March the cavalry moved out to the east and around Gaza. Their object was to block the enemy's line of retreat while the 53rd Division

Deir el Balah, a small native village now, was once a place of considerable importance. It is reputed to have been the home of Delilah, and St. Hilaire, the first hermit saint, was born near the spot and established a monastery. It was at one time a large fortified town; Richard the Lion Hearted occupied it for some time and was besieged by Saladin. Nothing now remains to show its former greatness but the dilapidated tomb of a crusader and that of St. Hilaire, with a few fragments of carved marble, built into mud walls.

attacked Gaza in front. The role of the 54th Division was to cross the Wadi after the cavalry, to a position near Sheikh Abbas, 5 miles south-east of Gaza, one brigade with a brigade of guns being held as reinforcements for the Desert Column. The main body of Turks were at Tel el Nijile in the Huj area, with detachments at Gaza, Sheri'a, Hareira, and Beersheba. The enemy's strength was believed to be between two and three divisions.

On this memorable morning of the 26th the first moves were carried out without a hitch except in point of time—a most important factor. The delay was caused by a dense sea fog which came up just before daybreak, after the move was well under way, and did not clear away for some four hours, during which time none of the troops could move without great difficulty and only at a snail's pace. The Australian cavalry duly closed the north-west exits of Gaza, placing themselves astride the main road, with their flank resting on the sea. The New Zealanders and the Imperial Mounted Division had crossed the Wadi at 6.15 a.m. followed by the Imperial Camel Corps, closing the road from Huj and Hareira against any attempt of Turkish troops to bring relief from this direction.

A detachment of the 2nd Australian Light Horse captured the commander of the 53rd Turkish Division, with his staff and 30 other ranks, as he was driving into Gaza. This little item of news spread rapidly among our troops, and some confusion of the rumour called forth amusing comments from Thomas Atkins as to which 53rd Divisional Commander was meant, the commander of our own 53rd Division being a very well-known and picturesque figure. The Imperial Mounted Division, to the south-east, soon found themselves engaged against enemy mounted troops, supported by infantry, which through the day constantly increased in numbers and energy. They also suffered considerably from the Turkish heavy guns at Hareira.

The troops making the frontal attack, under Major-General A. G. Dallas, had crossed the Wadi some 3 miles from the sea. Two brigades of the 53rd Division attacked with one brigade in reserve and with the Gloucestershire Hussars, one battalion of the 53rd Division, and some guns demonstrating along the coast on their left. During the morning the attack made good

progress among the sand-hills of Mansura Ridge and Sheluf, between 2 and 3 miles from the town of Gaza to the south.

On the right of the 53rd the 54th Division, under Major-General S. W. Hare, had during the morning gained the Sheikh Abbas Ridge to the south and east of the town. About midday an attack was launched on 'Ali el Muntar (Samson's Mount), which was in the south-eastern portion of the actual defences of the town, and the advance was carried steadily forward under heavy rifle, machine-gun, and shrapnel fire. The greater part of both mounted divisions were then thrown in, under Major-General Chauvel, on the east and north-east of Gaza, to support the infantry attack from the south, and by nightfall a good part of the enemy's positions was in our hands, 'Ali Muntar having been carried. Meanwhile strong enemy forces were pressing back our troops east of Gaza, in an attempt to bring relief to the garrison. The pressure on that side was relieved by the 3rd Australian Light Horse Regiment, supported by Horse Artillery and motor batteries, and further advance was prevented. The Australians particularly distinguished themselves in these days' fighting, especially the brigade so ably handled by Brigadier-General Ryrie.

The results of the first day of battle were that Gaza was surrounded, we had inflicted serious losses and taken about 700 prisoners; 'Ali Muntar was in the hands of the 53rd Division, but our men were hard pressed by relief columns from the east, who were being held back by detachments of cavalry in inadequate force. The 54th Division were in possession of Sheikh Abbas, but with one flank  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles away from the other infantry division. The Australians and New Zealanders, much extended, were actually engaged in street fighting. Unless Gaza fell before darkness came on we would be obliged to withdraw for lack of water, for most of the mounted troops had been unable to water during the day.

'It was at this moment', wrote General Murray, 'that the loss of two hours' daylight made itself particularly felt, since, had two more hours' daylight now been available, there is no doubt that the infantry would have been able to consolidate the positions they had won, and for arrangements to have been made by which the 54th Division could have effected junction with the 53rd. It is perhaps possible that, if General Dobell had at this stage pushed forward his reserve (the 52nd Division) to support the 53rd, the result would have been different, but

the difficulty of supplying water for men and horses would have been immense and impossible to realize by those who were not on the spot.'

Under the circumstances, the engagement was broken off, the Desert Column was withdrawn, the retirement being covered by the Imperial Camel Corps, and the 53rd Division, abandoning 'Ali Muntar, took up a new line on the west of the Wadi Ghazze.

The withdrawal of the mounted troops and the 53rd Division gave the enemy an opportunity of reinforcing the Gaza positions. At daybreak our patrols were again in possession of 'Ali Muntar, General Dobell assumed direct command of the 53rd Division and the Imperial Camel Corps, and prompt steps were taken to reinforce the forward points once more in our hands. But before the reinforcements had reached their objectives a counter-attack developed with strong bodies of fresh Turkish troops who came rapidly in from the north and east, and soon drove our detached forces back. The acute salient in our line formed by the position held by the two infantry divisions was now exposed to attack on three sides, and it became necessary to fall back sufficiently to straighten this part of the line. The enemy then occupied the ridge near Sheikh Abbas, and from that point brought artillery fire to bear on our rear positions, doing considerable damage and preventing any movement of camel transport for the day. Though at no point was the Turkish counter-attack completely successful, it became evident that our line could not be permanently held; it was badly exposed to the Turkish guns, the supply of water, ammunition, and rations for the infantry could not be maintained so far from the rail-head, both men and horses of the cavalry were tired out; accordingly, it was decided to withdraw the infantry during the night, and by daybreak our whole force was retired behind the Wadi Ghazze, covering Balah. On the 29th this line was moved forward to cover the Wadi and divided into sectors held by the 54th, 52nd, and 53rd Divisions. The railway had now reached Khan Yunis, bringing our rail-head within a few miles of the front-line troops.

The first battle of Gaza inflicted a very considerable loss on the enemy, including 950 prisoners, but cost us 4,000 casualties. We gained possession of the Wadi, but the capture

of Gaza had not been achieved. If the loss of time caused by fog at the very beginning had not occurred, if a water-supply could have been maintained, and possibly if General Dobell had energetically thrown in his reserves on the first day, the result might have been victory and the capture of Gaza. There has always been a wide difference of opinion as to the soundness of trying to take Gaza at all. Had General Murray succeeded in this effort or the next, it still remains doubtful what further moves he could have found possible. To undertake operations in the hill country of Palestine would have necessitated far greater resources than were at the time at his disposal. He had already accomplished his main purpose, he had made the Canal safe, and had cleared Egypt and Sinai of all enemies, establishing law, order, and prosperity in the wake of his army. Further movement eastward involved making great demands for labour, supplies, and animals on an already depleted country. With the serious pressure felt by the Allies on other fronts, there was much to be said for halting on this eastern frontier for the remainder of the war—a tedious job, but not a difficult one. No doubt the Turk would have been glad to stop where he was, and it seems doubtful whether Germany would have troubled much about the Syrian campaign, which was far from the main line of the Baghdad route.

The railway reached Balah in the first week in April, and Balah was quickly developed into a large rail-head and centre of activity. The first battle of Gaza was scarcely over before urgent preparation was made for a second attack in greater force. To overcome the difficulty of water-supply, tanks were set up in the Wadi Ghazze to contain a sufficient supply for two divisions. Well-sinking operations did not develop a sufficient quantity, and arrangements were made to carry forward, by pipe-lines, water from rail-head.

The enemy had in the meantime used every effort to strengthen his position with trenches and barbed wire, and had largely increased the garrison at Gaza, bringing it up to five infantry divisions and one of cavalry, with many additional details and machine-gun companies. It was clear that he had given up all idea of evacuating Gaza, and was now prepared to give further battle. An extensive system of defences was constructed from Gaza to Atawineh Ridge, between 6 and



7 miles to the south-east. These well-built works made it impossible to use our mounted troops to encircle the town as before without first breaking the line and making a large space for the horsemen to go through. The following plans were developed to renew the attack on April 17th.

The advance on Gaza was to be carried out in two stages by three infantry and two cavalry divisions. The first stage was to occupy the line of ridges south of Gaza which has been already mentioned, Sheikh Abbas-Mansura, on which strong posts could deal effectively with any threat to a flank. This was to be followed by the necessary time to develop water-supply, improve communications, bring up guns and tanks, and accumulate supplies. The second stage was to be a heavy bombardment quickly followed by a rapid advance on Gaza. The enemy had greatly strengthened the defences of Gaza itself to the west of 'Ali Muntar, his line running through the Warren, Labyrinth, Green Hill, Middlesex Hill, and Lees Hill, and closing all approaches to the town from south-west, south, and south-east. These defences were strongly entrenched, heavily wired, and partly concealed in a maze of cactus hedges, in which were numerous machine guns manned by Germans. Between Gaza and the sea was a strong double line of trenches and works, hidden among cactus hedges and mud banks.

On the 17th of April the first step was taken at daybreak, the ridges were carried, and the ground consolidated with practically no casualties. The final stage began on the 19th, assisted by the guns of the French battleship *Requin* and Nos. 21 and 31 monitors. The *Requin* and the monitors began to hammer 'Ali Muntar in the early morning, and this was followed by an attack on the Atawineh line by the mounted troops. Throughout the day continuous battle raged fiercely all along the front. Our infantry divisions pushed steadily forward, and the Camel Corps, Australians, and New Zealanders did gallant deeds. Counter-attacks were repulsed hour after hour, but the task was too great to go as rapidly as had been planned. When night came on, and after consultation with the divisional commanders, General Dobell expressed strongly his opinion that further advance would not offer sufficient prospect of success to justify the heavy casualties which would certainly result, and asked General Murray's sanction to cancel

the instructions given for the next day's attack, which was granted.

The ground which had been gained on the 19th was held and consolidated on the 20th, and no counter-attack of any consequence took place. The direct result was a gain of ground to our tactical position around Gaza, but the military advantage secured was not great, the losses had been heavy, and it was quite plain that we were not likely to succeed in a direct attack on such a strong position, that for the time being, until considerable reinforcements could arrive, our forces must settle down to trench warfare.

General Dobell, who had been in bad health for some time, found himself unequal to the strain of further operations, and was obliged to hand over command of the Eastern Force to Lieutenant-General Chetwode, who was in turn succeeded in the command of the Desert Column by Major-General Chauvel, while Major-General Chaytor took over the Anzac Mounted Division. The enemy continued to reinforce his garrison at Gaza until it amounted to about six divisions with two others on his left. He also received strong additions of artillery, machine guns, and some mounted troops.





LORD ALLENBY

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE CAPTURE OF BEERSHEBA

On the 28th of June 1917 General Sir Edmund H. H. Allenby took over the command from General Murray. He had been sent out with instructions to look well into the situation and 'to report on the conditions in which offensive operations against the Turkish Army on the Palestine Front might be undertaken in the autumn or winter of 1917'. By this date, to quote his dispatch, 'Gaza had been made into a strong modern fortress', and from Gaza the enemy's line of heavily fortified positions extended to Beersheba, which was again well protected by works. The intervening prepared positions were not a continuous trench system, but at intervals of about 1,500 to 2,000 yards. The total distance from the sea to the south-eastern flank was about 30 miles. The lateral communications were excellent and threatened points could be quickly reinforced.

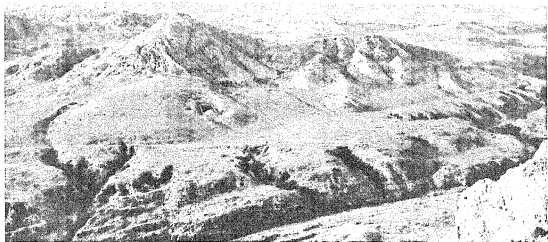
The British line ran roughly parallel to the Turkish line for about 22 miles from the sea, the intervening space being low ground or the wide bed of the Wadi Ghazze. The water problem was still our greatest handicap. With the exception of the positions in front of Gaza, none of our troops were sufficiently near to strike an effective blow without moving out of the radius of supply. General Allenby had decided that it was necessary to take the enemy's positions at Hareira and Sheri'a in the centre of the whole line, but in order to attack them with success an ample water-supply was necessary, and to provide it caused considerable delay. Beersheba had the only wells within reasonable distance. If Beersheba could be captured it would not only give us the needed water-supply but also open the way for the main blow. Once we were past Beersheba, the enemy would have an exposed flank which could be pressed so effectively that he would be obliged to abandon all his other positions.

In order to deceive the Turks as to our intentions, an attack was to be made on Gaza in conjunction with a naval bombard-

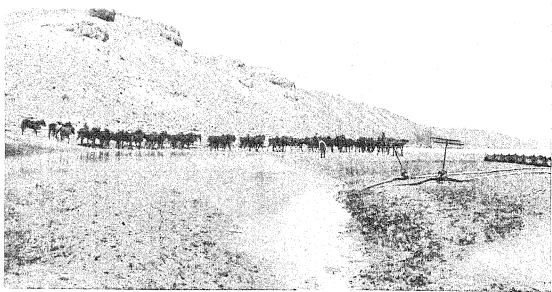
ment. Tremendous traffic pressure was now thrown on the railway. In addition to the already large amount of tonnage carried daily to supply the army, it was called upon to move up a number of siege guns and other batteries, together with great quantities of ammunition and stores in order to accumulate reserves at rail-heads. Moreover, it was necessary to bring up a mass of material in order to carry the southern branch forward as rapidly as possible, across the Wadi Shellal to Karm, and to lengthen the coast-line beyond Balah to the Wadi Ghazze. From July onward to the day of our attack at the end of October, while the enemy made every effort to strengthen the Gaza-Beersheba line, our branch railway south from Shellal was pushed farther south past Gamli, to supply Esani and El Baqqar, and water-supplies were developed at Esani, El Khelasa, and Asluj, farther out in the same direction, in order to make a convenient starting-point for the mounted troops who were to strike at Beersheba after a wide flanking movement.

The narrative will be made more clear by a brief description of the country behind the Turkish position and of the general topography where the next stage of fighting took place. The shape and structure of Southern Palestine is very simple. A low slightly curving coast-line continues from Gaza north by east to beyond Jaffa. There are no natural harbours. Running north and south, 70 miles east of the sea at the southern end and about 30 miles in the north, is the deep cleft of the Jordan valley and the Dead Sea, which is 1,300 feet below the level of the Mediterranean. Running parallel with this valley, between it and the coast, is a rugged backbone of mountain land, the Judean Hills, west of which is the coastal plain of Philistia.

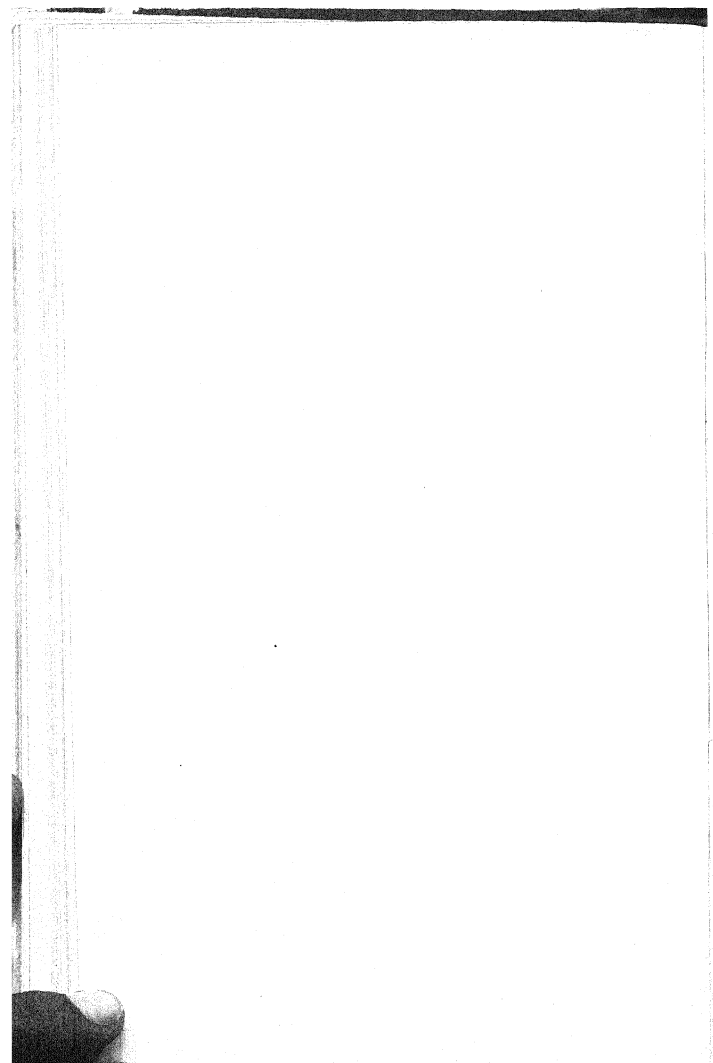
This group of rough hills and valleys is about 55 miles long, from the desert country in the south to where it joins the hill system of Southern Samaria. It is not more than 30 miles wide in any part, and is distinguished by numberless deep valleys and gulleys running westward to the coast or down the steep slopes of its eastern side. These gulleys form natural obstacles to military movement and supply. Two-thirds of the way between Gaza and Jaffa the Nahr Suqreir makes a stronger obstacle line than the others. It runs into the sea after a northern and westerly course, having passed to the south of Et Time, the junction of railway lines, of which one



IN THE WADI GHAZZE



WATERING AT ESANI





follows the coast plain south to El Majdal and Gaza, while the other skirts the foot-hills on to Beersheba. In the middle of the southern portion of the Judean Hills stands Hebron, and in the north central part, Jerusalem. The principal road west and east runs from Jaffa to Jerusalem, then down to the lower reaches of the Jordan, and the crossing of the river below Jericho. This road gives access to the country and hills of Moab to the east of the Jordan. The next natural line of obstacles crossing the country is the system of hills, on which stand Samaria and Nablus, running from Haifa (Mount Carmel) south-east to the Jordan. The two hill systems interlace around Jerusalem. North of them lie Nazareth and the Plain of Esdraelon.

On this rugged lump of hills has been played the drama of Jewish history. Here was the birthplace of Christianity, and here were the dramatic scenes of the Crusades. No one has ever been able to defend this country from invasion. There is nothing actually to interrupt movement in a continuous line either east to west, or north to south. The difficulty has always been one of transport and supply. The only good permanent defence lines are the southern frontier from Gaza to Beersheba and the northern one through Nablus. Our advance would as before depend on our railways and water-supplies. The enemy could consume or destroy as he retired, while our transport difficulties would increase as lines of communication became longer and more dispersed. The retirement of the Turkish Army into Palestine meant to us a complete change in the conditions of warfare. Again, there was need for reorganization, railway extension and improvement, while a large amount of training had to be gone through to change an army admirable for desert work into an army organized and equipped for hill fighting.

It was plain enough that once we could force the Beersheba flank we could force a collapse of the whole Gaza line, and the abandonment of that line would open the way to gaining the whole country south of Jerusalem.

'The German Staff in Sinai had so far back as August decided that the British would make another effort to break through on that front, and with such forces that, unless the Turks were heavily reinforced, the result could only be in favour of the British. That the weaknesses of their position were its extent

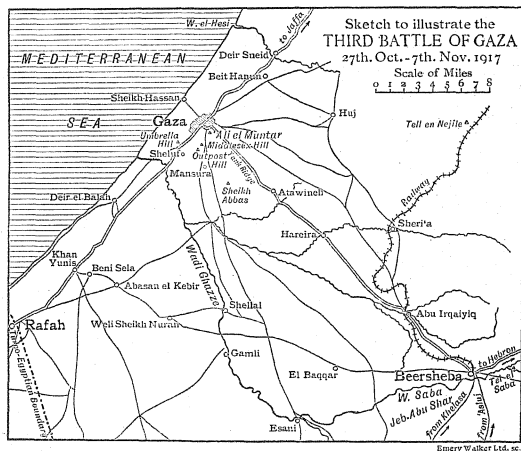
and the exposed left flank at Beersheba was fully realized by the Command in the field, and during August and September repeated requests were made to the Higher Command for a shortening of the line by withdrawing from Beersheba, or generous reinforcements so that Beersheba could be held *à l'outrance*.

The soundness of these demands was fully realized by the German advisers of the Turks, but there existed a policy which was a veritable millstone to those who wished to conduct the operations in accordance with clear strategic principles. This policy was directed towards the recovery of Baghdad. Baghdad, a former capital of the Khalifs, and therefore important to the Pan-Islamic party, was ever before the Young Turk, soldier and politician, and the plan had received the backing of Berlin. A composite German force had been formed, and one of the first of German soldiers, Marshal Erich von Falkenhayn, lent for the carrying through of this undertaking. If Baghdad was to be retaken, every man and gun must be sent to Iraq, and every man sent to Sinai decreased the chance of success. But to this was the unanswerable argument of those who asked that reinforcements should be sent to Sinai: "If the Sinai front is broken, Palestine and Syria will fall into the enemy's hands, and not only will Baghdad not be retaken, but the armies in Iraq will be caught like a rat in a trap, with the British across their lines of communication at Aleppo." It was not until mid-October that this argument prevailed, and then it was too late. Troops being diverted from Mesopotamia were still on the lines of communication, and the aircraft was still being unpacked and put together on their aerodromes, when the British troops attacked and captured Beersheba on October 31st, 1917.<sup>1</sup>

By the evening of October 30th, 1917, those of our troops who were to attack Beersheba were ready for action. Bombardment of Gaza, in which ships of the Royal Navy and a French battleship co-operated, had begun on the 27th, and was continued on the 30th, the object being to direct the attention of the enemy to the Gaza flank. General Allenby's plan was, after a flanking movement against the Turkish left at Beersheba and a holding attack against his right at Gaza, to strike his heaviest blow at the centre of the line. Captured documents subsequently showed that, while the enemy was in general well informed as to our movements, he was completely deceived as to Allenby's intention, and expected our main effort to be directed on Gaza.

<sup>1</sup> From *A Brief Record of the Advance of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, July 1917 to October 1918*, page dated October 28th, 1917.

On the Beersheba flank and on the western side of Beersheba Allenby proposed to assault the enemy's works between the Wadi Saba and the Khelasa road with two infantry divisions, the 60th (London) and the 74th (Yeomanry),<sup>1</sup> the Camel Corps co-operating. The left of the line was to be covered by part of the 53rd Division and the right by a regiment of cavalry. The southern and eastern defences of Beersheba were to be attacked by our mounted troops. In order that the artillery



might be brought up to an effective range in support of the infantry, it was necessary first for the infantry to capture the enemy's advanced works.

With a now thoroughly reorganized force, newly equipped, with a largely increased staff, including many experts from the Western Front, with ample troops, guns, and every material of war, General Allenby was able to reopen the offensive under far more favourable conditions than had fallen to the lot of

<sup>1</sup> Two divisions, the 60th (London) Division and the 10th (Irish) Division, had been brought from Salonika. A third, the 74th (Yeomanry) Division, had been composed of dismounted Yeomanry, and came up to the front in time for the second battle of Gaza.

his predecessor, and all his plans had been worked out with the utmost thoroughness in the minutest detail. The concentration of the Desert Corps, via Esani, was accomplished by night marches, 'Brigade area' tentage being left standing. A brigade marched out at night and another took its place before daylight, so that the enemy's air reconnaissance could not detect any increase of tents or shelters. Large areas in the island of Cyprus had been covered with tents, sent there from Salonika. These tents in constantly increasing numbers were provided solely for the purpose of deceiving the enemy's air force during reconnaissance from Northern Syria, with the probable result that considerable reinforcements on their way south were diverted to meet an expected landing at Alexandria. To what extent the dispositions of Turkish troops were affected is impossible to say, but a marked decrease of movement was immediately observed throughout the Turkish lines of communication.

Our infantry divisions had been moved quietly from the coast to the south-east, and their presence in the neighbourhood of Beersheba had been kept a secret. For some days before the attack took place a personal reconnaissance of the ground was made by all regimental officers in each brigade. They went out and over their frontage both by night and by day, armed with a rifle, until they knew the ground thoroughly. Escorts were supplied by two Australian Light Horse regiments up to certain points, beyond which the officers, in pairs or singly, worked forward and studied every yard of ground over which they were to lead their men. In the sector assigned to the 181st Brigade of the 60th (London) Division this reconnaissance was completed as far as Abu-Shar within 1,500 yards of the first line Turkish trenches, and without seeing a single Turk. The actual attack was to be carried out by map and compass bearings. The staff theory was that by personal reconnaissance of the ground coupled with a thorough understanding of the situation and plan of operations by every officer the enterprise could be carried out without any lengthy written field orders, and this was done. All officers, from brigade commanders down to subalterns, knew and understood exactly what was required of them. Great precaution and constant supervision was necessary to ensure that camels and camel drivers did not give away the secret during the weeks in which large amounts

of supplies were being brought up, and a tribute is due to the camel transport, to the energy and perseverance of the Fellaheen camel drivers.

The men were trained to go for eight hours, if required to do so, without more water than could be carried in their bottles, though some unit commanders thought that four hours was the maximum to be expected under the trying climatic conditions during which the move was carried out and the attack took place. Small arm ammunition was distributed in dumps partially covered with sand, in wadis, gulleys, and depressions all over the area of operations, a great amount of trouble and delay being thus avoided. Tools were distributed in suitable dumps. Packs were carried forward and made into dumps at the assembly point for each battalion. Roads had to be made and, during the operations, kept in repair, in addition to much work on existing tracks and wadi crossings, and in order to ensure secrecy all had to be done at night, for enemy aircraft were always well over in the daytime. On the night before Zero day the forward portions of roads were rapidly completed by pioneer units up to the points of assembly. Artillery officers were required to make a thorough reconnaissance of all ground affecting their part of the scheme, but all information gathered from every source was pooled and made available to every one concerned.

During the night of the 30th/31st October the troops detailed for the capture of Beersheba moved up to the starting-points of attack. Two objectives were set for the infantry on the western side of the town on the morning of the 31st. The first was an advanced work in the Turkish position, which was rushed by the Londoners—the 181st Brigade—in a very short space of time. The artillery was then brought up to cut the wire of the main enemy defences, and they were carried by the early afternoon. Thus the whole ground from the Khelasa road to the Wadi Saba was in our possession, and by nightfall the Turkish positions north of the Wadi had been occupied also. The casualties had been slight considering the strength of the enemy works, and a large proportion had been caused by shell fire during the advance and just previous to the assault, the Turkish guns being very accurate and difficult to locate. The success had been due to the element of surprise and to the effective co-operation of artillery and infantry.

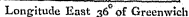
The infantry could probably have advanced forthwith through Beersheba without much opposition, but delay was caused by the cavalry, which was to co-operate from the eastern side, being held up for about four hours at Tel el Saba. To this point they had come by a long waterless march from Khelasa to the south-west, swinging around the arc of a wide circle of roads of 12 to 14 miles radius, and the horses were badly exhausted by the previous long day's march from Esani to Khelasa. Early in the morning the New Zealanders moved out to the attack of Tel el Saba (a hill work strongly held by infantry and machine guns). On their left to the south was the 1st Light Horse Brigade, while the 2nd Light Horse Brigade galloped away to the north under heavy shell fire, making for the Hebron road to cut off the Turkish retreat. The New Zealanders, fighting on foot, pushed their way up the slopes and captured Tel el Saba. Late afternoon came on and Beersheba had not fallen. Again we saw the old danger of no water. If the enemy was able to hold on until night came he could perhaps readjust his forces and upset all our plans. Some of the cavalry had covered 35 miles or more since morning and none less than 30 miles. Water was plentiful in the wells of Beersheba. Could Beersheba be taken and the water be reached? The Australians answered the question. The Anzac Mounted Division was 4 miles away to the south, held in reserve, and just before sunset Brigadier-General Grant received orders to attack with the 4th Light Horse Brigade. To reach Beersheba he would have to carry a strong system of enemy trenches, and as there was not time for an advance on foot he attacked mounted at a gallop. The 4th Regiment from Victoria and the 12th from New South Wales were chosen to lead the charge. Moving off at a trot they were soon in the full swing of steeplechase speed, heading straight for Beersheba. Heavy machine-gun and shell fire only seemed to increase their pace; charging wildly at the Turkish trenches, they jumped the first line clean over the rows of bayonets, were instantly dismounted and at bloody work among the surprised enemy. Other squadrons swept on into the very middle of the town. It was soon over and Beersheba was ours. The garrison were thrown into hopeless disorder, and believing themselves outnumbered by a large cavalry force were completely subdued. 1,100 prisoners were taken, but as darkness

came on many more got away. The Light Horsemen had charged with fixed bayonets, for at this date they did not, like the Yeomanry, carry cavalry swords. With reference to the pursuit after the Gaza-Beersheba line had been broken, Brigadier-General L. C. Wilson, commanding the 3rd Light Horse Brigade of the Australian Mounted Division, wrote : 'From my subsequent experience of the use of the sword I consider it would have been invaluable here. If we had been armed with swords, I am sure we could have ridden on and captured thousands. As it was, we stood off and shot hundreds only.' At a later period the gallant general got his swords, as did the other mounted troops, and what good use they made of them is the story of the final round up and complete defeat of the Turkish Army in Syria.

That the Beersheba garrison were taken by surprise and had not expected a serious attack on that flank is shown by a captured enemy 'appreciation' : 'An outflanking attack on Beersheba with one infantry and one cavalry division is indicated, but the main attack, as before, must be expected from the Gaza front.' Although a Turkish aeroplane had bombed our mounted troops during their morning advance, the airman had for some reason failed to return, and our flanking movement was not detected until the immediate attack took place. The Australians had been thirty-six hours without water when the Beersheba wells fell into our hands ; some of the wells had been damaged, but most of the water-supply was soon in working order again. It was learned that the German Engineer officer responsible for the demolition of wells if abandoned was at this time on leave in Jerusalem. The difficulty of watering about 30,000 horses quickly was by no means small, even with the abundant wells of Beersheba, and some considerable hardship and a few horse casualties ensued.

To sum up—the results of the capture of Beersheba were that a very strong position had been taken with slight loss, and the Turkish garrison completely put out of action. Over 2,000 prisoners had been captured, and about 500 Turkish dead were found on the battle-field. The enemy's left flank was now open to a decisive blow, which our army was ready promptly to deliver.

Railways.....  
Main roads.....





## CHAPTER IX

### FROM GAZA TO JERUSALEM AND THE JORDAN

ON the morning of November 1st the 53rd Division were well out into the hills north of Beersheba, with the Imperial Camel Corps on their right, on their way to make a sure flank for our attack on the centre of the Turkish line at and in the neighbourhood of Sheri'a. Some of our mounted troops were across the Hebron road. Another division of the XXth Corps,<sup>1</sup> the 10th (Irish) Division, had come up and secured Irqaiyiq along the valley between Beersheba and Sheri'a, with the 74th on their right. The enemy made a movement with his cavalry and some infantry units eastward into the foot-hills between Hebron and the Sheri'a position, and attempted a counter-stroke designed to draw our main attack in that direction. This move, had it been allowed to involve our main effort, would probably have resulted in serious alterations of our plan, loss of time, and disorganization of supply. We might eventually have found ourselves in possession of Beersheba, and nothing more. But General Allenby was too strong a leader to be diverted from his original intention, and from the 3rd to the 6th the battle raged night and day around Khuweilfeh-Rijm and the Kawakah, Rushdi and various other works to the south and east of the centre point of the enemy's line. On our right the 53rd Division maintained stubborn and persistent attacks, drawing off Turkish forces from the centre point, and giving the Turks the impression that our object was rather to outflank on the east than to break through the centre.

The time of attack on Gaza was to be decided when the result of the Beersheba flanking movement became known, so that pressure at the right moment might draw the enemy's reserves toward Gaza and lay open the Sheri'a position for our principal thrust. As the Beersheba coup had brought us water supplies on that flank, it seemed possible to launch our attack

<sup>1</sup> The XXth and XXIst Corps were formed in August 1917. The XXth under Sir Philip Chetwode operated inland on the right, the XXIst under Sir Edward Bulfin operated on the left and after the taking of Jerusalem in the coastal sector.

on Sheri'a by November the 3rd, and the attack on Gaza was ordered for the morning of the 2nd. It was to be made against a front of some 6,000 yards, running from Umbrella Hill (2,000 yards south-west of the town) northward to Sheikh Hassan. The greatest distance from our front line was about 3,000 yards, and the intervening zone was a heavy sandy waste of small dunes, some 100 feet or more in height. A few hours previous to the main attack Umbrella Hill was assaulted and captured. This position, which flanked our advance, drew a heavy bombardment from the enemy's guns, which continued all along our front line for two hours, but stopped just in time for our main attack to go forward at 3 a.m., as had been previously arranged.

The attack was successful at all points, about 450 prisoners were taken, and the enemy suffered severe casualties, one of their divisions losing one-third of its effectives. The primary object of the attack, to prevent any units from being drawn off from Gaza towards the Beersheba flank and to draw into Gaza as many Turkish reserves as possible, was fully attained. In addition, our capture of Sheikh Hassan, on the north-west of the town, threatened the whole trench system of Gaza, and gave us an advantage if the enemy should attempt to retire.

Our bombardment was heavy and almost continuous. On the 6th some movement was reported on the roads north of the town. An attack was launched on Outpost Hill and Middlesex Hill, at the southern end of the town defences, which met with only slight opposition, and as we pushed forward it was found that the enemy had retired during the night, and we soon occupied the northern and eastern defences of Gaza. Turkish rear-guards left on the south-east of the town at Atawineh, Beit Hanun, and Tank Hill continued to fire on 'Ali Muntar and Gaza until nightfall.

So ended the last siege of Gaza, the 'City of a hundred sieges', one of the oldest towns known to history and throughout its long existence many times a bone of contention between military powers. It was now a depopulated ruin. Wholesale damage had been done by explosions of Turkish ammunition, and the extent to which woodwork of every description had been torn away for trench purposes or for firewood was shown by the fact that one portion of a 'corduroy' road was found to contain, under a thick layer of earth, several beautiful

carved doors carried off from the house of some rich merchant or official.

Meanwhile the 60th, 74th, and 10th Divisions pressed the attack in the centre; by the night of the 6th of November the Sheri'a position was won, and on the 7th the mounted troops were through the broken line.

As soon as it was found that the enemy had left Gaza, a part of our force was pushed on along the coast to prevent a stand being made on the line of the Wadi el Hesi. The cavalry engaged the Turkish rear-guard at Beit Hanun, and the north bank of the Wadi was reached and occupied by our troops in spite of stiff opposition and determined counter-attacks. On the right of the British front at Gaza the situation remained unchanged until the 8th, when the advance was continued, with the intention of cutting off the enemy's rear-guard in the Tank and Atawineh positions. They retreated on the 7th and 8th, and near Huj some of the Worcester and Warwick Yeomanry made a fine charge, capturing 12 guns and breaking up the rear-guard.

The enemy now were in a state of disorganized retreat, our infantry having completely broken through both at Sheri'a and on the coast. By the 9th the operations were entirely of the nature of a pursuit, the Turks being closely followed by as many of our troops as could be provided with the necessary supplies so far in front of the rail-head. The mounted troops were ordered to press the retreat relentlessly, and a cavalry chase continued for about 50 miles, close on the enemy's heels, the speed being limited by difficulties of water-supply and transport. All the way, however, the Turkish rear-guard showed themselves game fighters, and made skilful use of machine guns. A portion of the Turkish force on our right flank retired through Hebron towards Jerusalem, pursued by Yeomanry. The Yeomen and Anzac men were aggressive, fast, and did their work splendidly. Up to that time this was the largest cavalry drive of the war. On the 9th the enemy attempted to organize a counter-attack from the Hebron direction, but owing to his known disorganized state the threat was practically disregarded.

The cavalry pressed on towards Junction Station in the hope of cutting off the troops retiring on Jerusalem, and between the mounted forces and the coast the 52nd (Lowland) Division

toiled and fought their way through heavy sand, stubbornly opposed by the Turks, who made a strong counter-attack just south of Ascalon. Four times were the Scots pushed back from the high ground of Deir Seneid, and each time they came back on to the hill with greater energy. On the 11th and 12th of November determined resistance was offered at Nahr Suqreir, and two sharp encounters took place before the enemy was forced to retire, one with Australian Light Horse and the other with the 52nd Division and part of the 75th, supported by mounted troops. It became clear that the rear-guard phase was developing into a desperate stand by all the Turkish troops that could be induced to fight, in a last effort to arrest our pursuit south of Junction Station. By this time the cavalry divisions were beginning to feel the strain and lack of water, and it was necessary as far as possible to work the formations in relays. In view of the indescribable difficulties of staff control and supply arrangements in a continuous moving battle of many days, the wonderful success of this cavalry drive shows how thoroughly efficient were the staff officers of the divisional and brigade formations.

The direction of our advance had hitherto been northward, now it began to move to the right and eastward with the intention of gaining the railway from Jaffa to Jerusalem and control of the enemy's lateral communications. On the 14th Junction Station was captured, and on the 15th the advance had swept on to within 3 miles of Jaffa and had gained Er Ramle and Lydda. On the 16th Jaffa was occupied by the New Zealanders without opposition, the enemy having retired to an entrenched position on the river 'Auja some miles to the north. The most astonishing part of this campaign was the work of supply and transport. Considering the distance of our base in Egypt and the great desert spaces intervening between the base and the first bit of grass lands in Palestine, the task accomplished is one of the most wonderful things in the history of warfare. The resource and energy of our Engineers and the efficiency of our transport staff achieved what seemed impossible.

The left of our line north of Jaffa became the pivot on which the army swung across Judea, the centre moving forward in a huge blunt salient up to En Nabi Samweil north-west of Jerusalem. The Turkish Army was now broken into two parts,

one portion flung west and northward from Jerusalem to the coast and the other wing southward, along the high ground from Jerusalem towards Hebron. Our thrust forward in the centre threatened to cut off this southern force.

The Philistine plains are grand country for cavalry fighting, but the Judean Hills are infantry ground only. The great drive up the rolling plains finished the cavalry work for the time being, and the next phase for the horsemen was to do the work of dismounted troops with the infantry. The army pressed eastward through the narrow passes up the steep rocky terraces of the hills towards Jerusalem. The enemy still was stubborn, and the fighting was severe, but only one Dominion unit was immediately engaged in this part of the campaign. This was the West Australian Light Horse Regiment, which was present on the 9th of December when Jerusalem was surrendered.

Since the 31st of October our advance had covered a distance of 75 miles. After the severe fighting at Gaza the army as a whole had covered 40 miles in nine days, with continuous fighting of enemy rear-guards and two severe engagements. During the same period the 52nd (Lowland) Division had covered 69 miles. On December 9th the total of prisoners captured since October 31st was 12,000, in addition to about 100 guns.

Before the year ended our line was pushed forward both in the coast sector and to the north of Jerusalem. On the coast the Turks held the north bank of the river 'Auja only 3 miles distant from Jaffa. On the night of the 20th/21st December the 52nd Division crossed the river at its mouth, and on the following night and the 22nd that division and the 54th advancing on its right, with the help of naval bombardment, forced the Turks back for 5 miles, and established a line which made the harbour of Jaffa and the light railway and roads from Jaffa to Lydda secure, giving more room for our troops round Lydda and Ramle. On the night of the 26th/27th the Turks began a determined effort with fresh troops to retake Jerusalem, the centre of the main attack being due north of the city astride the Jerusalem-Nablus road. The attack forestalled an intended advance on our side, and the result of three and a half days' fighting, with severe Turkish losses, was that the British line was carried forward from 3 to 6

miles, and Jerusalem was made safe against the possibility of recapture.

Thus the year 1917 went out with Jerusalem firmly in our hands, but before a further northern advance on a large scale could be undertaken it was necessary to control the Jordan valley, on the other side of the Jordan to threaten and if possible paralyse the Hejaz railway, thereby facilitating the operations of our Arab allies, and to give time for rest, reorganization, and training, for building railways and bringing up supplies.

On the 19th-21st February 1918 the 1st Australian Light Horse Brigade and the New Zealand Mounted Rifles co-operated with the 60th (London) Division in the capture of Jericho, the Australian horsemen being the first to enter the town, though the brunt of the fighting had been borne by the Londoners. A month later, starting on the 21st of March, the Anzac Mounted Division again co-operated with the London troops and with the Imperial Camel Brigade in forcing a crossing of the Jordan and mounting the hills of Moab, to attack Amman on the Hejaz railway and break up the line. During the operation rain fell continuously, the mountain passes were hard to traverse, the nights were bitterly cold, the fighting was incessant. Es Salt was occupied, the advance was pushed to Amman, and though that point was too strongly held to be taken some miles of the line were broken up before the whole force was withdrawn, recrossing the Jordan on the 2nd of April, but retaining a bridge-head on the eastern bank. A month later there was a similar raid from the 30th of April to the 4th of May in which Es Salt was again entered, the Australian Light Horse showing to great advantage. These movements, though not wholly successful as regards their immediate objects, helped to confirm the enemy in the impression that our next advance on a large scale would be on this side and not on the coast.

Overseas troops were largely employed in patrolling and safe-keeping the Jordan valley in the great heat of the trying summer of 1918. On the 14th of July one section held by Australian troops was attacked by German infantry. Our position consisted of a series of strong points covering a wide front of rough country. Every post, except one which was wiped out, was surrounded but held out, and the Germans were

cleared off by a counter-attack by the 1st Australian Light Horse Brigade, leaving nearly 300 prisoners in the Australians' hands. Into the Jordan valley, too, came two infantry battalions of the British West Indies Regiment, and here as the year went on they made their name as fighting men.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile extensive changes had taken place in the composition of our forces in Palestine. The great German thrust called off to France a large number of Allenby's British troops, which, as is told below,<sup>2</sup> were practically replaced by Indian units, including the 3rd (Lahore) and 7th (Meerut) Divisions from Mesopotamia, which were already on their way to reinforce General Allenby when the German offensive began,<sup>3</sup> and including also the Indian cavalry who had just been transferred from France.<sup>4</sup> The summer and early autumn of the year was devoted to reorganization and intensive training as far as was possible in conjunction with front-line duties, and the Australian and New Zealand troops were now armed with the long pointed pattern of cavalry sword and carefully trained in its use with a view to the coming advance in which they were about to play so notable a part.

<sup>1</sup> See vol. ii, pp. 336-8.

<sup>2</sup> See below, p. 307.

<sup>3</sup> See below, pp. 271-2.

<sup>4</sup> See below, p. 239.

## CHAPTER X

### THE GREAT BREAK THROUGH AND THE RIDE FOR DAMASCUS

At daybreak on the 19th of September 1918 the great move began. By the evening of the 20th a sweeping victory had been assured. By October 1st Damascus had been reached and three Turkish armies, with all their material of war, utterly annihilated. So swift and so overwhelming a victory has hardly been paralleled in the history of war.

On the 18th of September our line extended from a point 12 miles north of Jaffa on the Mediterranean south-eastward along the northern edge of the plains of Sharon, then over the mountains of Samaria 2,000 feet high, down into the Jordan valley, at a point 1,000 feet below sea-level, and the crossings of the lowest reaches of the Jordan were firmly held over against the hills of Gilead. The total length of the front was about 55 miles. The XXIst Army Corps under General Bulfin held the western sector, its left resting on the sea, and was faced by the 8th Turkish Army. Sir Philip Chetwode's XXth Corps was opposed to the 7th Turkish Army on the highlands north of Jerusalem and south of Nablus. The Jordan valley was in charge of a force under Sir Edward Chaytor, on whose right beyond the Jordan the 4th Turkish Army was strung out. The Turks held at will the crossings of the Jordan north of the British line, and their front as a whole was a strong one for defence, most of their positions being on higher ground than ours, and their communications being well served. On the coastal plain they had two lines of defences, the second a mile and a half behind the first.

Allenby had great superiority over the enemy in numbers of fighting men and overwhelming superiority in mounted troops. He had no less than four divisions of cavalry, each of three brigades, making in all some 20,000 sabres. He himself was a cavalry man of mature experience. He had already commanded the largest formation of our cavalry forces and fully



appreciated the qualities and possibilities of mounted troops. His Australian and New Zealand horsemen, with the Yeomanry, had, under General Murray, driven the Turks across the Sinai Desert, and Allenby had seen with his own eyes their drive through Southern Palestine in 1917. These troops had been in the saddle from two to three years, and had given abundant evidence of superb fighting quality and marching endurance. The highly-trained Indian cavalry regiments who had lately been added to Allenby's army were also forceful fighters. Well they knew how to use their lances, and as horsemen they were second to none.

Besides having in cavalry most that a great leader of mounted troops could desire, he had a powerful infantry force of seven complete divisions and some other brigades and battalions, including an effective French contingent, all in fine fighting condition. For aerial reconnaissance he had clever and well-trained units of the Royal and Australian Flying Corps. His supply services had already done wonders, and railways, motor and animal transport were prepared for every condition of country and of weather. The Staff organization included specialists and experts, resourceful and efficient. In short the British Army in Palestine, full of confidence in its leaders, inspired by the memory of past success and sure confidence in coming victory, was a fine fighting force. The outer Empire was mainly represented by the troops from India, Australia, and New Zealand, but the Far East sent a Hongkong and Singapore mountain battery, in Chaytor's force were the two British West Indies battalions, and among Chetwode's troops was the coloured Cape Corps.

If we had simply pressed forward all along the whole or a part of the Turkish front, we should only have forced the enemy back on to other lines of defence, and General Allenby decided upon a concentrated effort to break through. What afterwards appeared to be a simple and direct plan had in reality involved infinite labour in preparation, organization, and training, and every detail had been worked out with the utmost care. Bold strategy coupled with the daring and endurance of hardened troops was evident enough throughout, but the most astonishing feature of it all was the clock-like precision with which every part moved at the highest speed.

The break through was to be on the coastal sector. Forty

miles to the north behind the Turkish positions lay the Esdraclon Plain—the Armageddon of old.

On the day before our advance the Turks were not aware of the fact that the 60th Division had been moved across to our left flank, nor that a large force of cavalry had been collected behind it, with other considerable changes in our dispositions. For days the Turkish airmen had seen considerable bodies of our troops marching leisurely eastward towards the Jordan valley, but they had not seen a far greater number of troops, with several brigades of cavalry, moving in the opposite direction by night. In consequence the enemy gathered his strength toward the hill sector, with the idea of checking what appeared to be a coming push up the Jordan valley, and left his line on the coast sector very thinly held opposite our concentration of troops.

On September 18th our preparations had been completed. The 60th, 7th (Meerut), 75th, 3rd (Lahore), and 54th Infantry Divisions were actually in position on the coast sector, other divisions holding the line having closed up to make room for them. Two strong cavalry divisions, the 4th and 5th,<sup>1</sup> were hidden in the orange groves north and east of Jaffa, and the Australian Mounted Division was near Lydda, all within a short distance of their respective starting-points for the attack. In Chetwode's command which held the line inland from the right of the coast sector, the 10th and 53rd Infantry Divisions had drawn in their flanks so as to allow space between the two divisions for 'Watson's Force', a composite formation of detachments of the XXth Corps cavalry, reinforcements, and pioneers. The 53rd Division was prepared to spring forward on El Mughaiyir on the night of the 18th/19th as soon as darkness fell, to bring up the right or eastern flank of the XXth Corps on the side of the Jordan valley in readiness for the main advance.

We had now 5 infantry divisions, 3 cavalry divisions, and over 300 guns, including most of the heavy artillery of our force, concentrated between Ramle, Jaffa, and the front line,

<sup>1</sup> These cavalry divisions bore the numbers borne by the Indian cavalry divisions in France. The 4th Cavalry Division represented what had been the Yeomanry Mounted Division from which six regiments had been withdrawn to serve as machine gunners in France, and had been replaced by Indian cavalry regiments. The 5th Cavalry Division was composed of Indian cavalry from France with some Yeomanry and Imperial Service cavalry units.

and all had been accomplished without the enemy's knowledge. The enterprise started this time with every advantage appertaining to the element of surprise. Our concentration had been further concealed by camouflage. In the Jordan valley several dummy camps were set up, canvas imitations of horses stood tethered in lines, and real mules were driven about drawing sledges or branches of trees to raise dust enough to suggest the greatest activity possible in an already very dusty locality. A conspicuous building in Jerusalem was emptied hurriedly of all its occupants, sentry boxes were placed in front of it, guards were mounted, and a great semblance of business was set up there. Rumours were carefully spread among suitable natives that this was hurriedly being made General Allenby's field headquarters for a great offensive. The Arab forces east of the Jordan made a spectacular sham attack on Amman and the Hejaz railway, put up a large base camp, and sent out imposing shows of reconnaissance in force. The Turkish staff was completely deceived and strenuous exertions were made to be ready for an attack on their left up to within a few hours of the commencement of our bombardment on the other flank.

For some days our airmen had kept the sky clear of all enemy machines. In a week they destroyed or drove down 15 planes and heavily bombed the Turkish aerodromes. Completely deceived as to our real intentions, the Turks were further handicapped by serious damage to their lines of communication before our attack was launched. From near Amman, the Arabs by quick night marches were again cutting the railways and all telegraph lines between Deraa and Damascus. This stopped immediate movement of supplies at the moment when they were most needed. The great forward telephone exchange of all the enemy's lateral communications was destroyed by an Australian bombing hit, so that in the early hours of the morning of the 19th the Turkish Army was already in a bad plight.

At 4.45 a.m. on the memorable 19th September 1918 our guns began a bombardment which lasted for one hour. This was followed by a rush of infantry who broke clean through the Turkish line on the coast sector without check or pause. There was hard fighting to the east near Rafat, where a French contingent met and overcame determined resistance. The pace at which the infantry broke through and the cavalry

got away past them is hard to describe. At 7.30 the 5th Cavalry Division had crossed the Nahr Iskanderune and by midday were well over it, followed by the 4th Cavalry Division. By evening both divisions were fed, watered, and ready to continue the advance. The 60th Division marched fighting 18 miles through heavy sand that day, and carried Tul Karm before night fell. The 7th (Meerut) were well into the hills of Et Taiyibe, and the 3rd (Lahore) Division, bearing to the east, had carried the strong positions of Qalqilye, Jaljulye, and Hableh, and penetrated into the foot-hills. The Royal Engineers, we are told in the *Brief Record of the Advance of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force*, in eight and a quarter hours, while the operations were in progress, laid down a pipeline of 7,000 yards, and had it carrying water from a millstream on the 'Auja, at the rate of 4,000 gallons per hour, into tanks for 70,000 gallons at Jaljulye.

The Australian Mounted Division, commanded by Major-General Hodgson, was, apart from its artillery and technical units, now composed of Australian units only, with the exception of one dashing regiment of French Colonial Regulars. The whole division was armed with swords, and the men were most anxious to try their strength in true cavalry fashion. Long will it be remembered how they rode out into the sunshine on that famous morning, the advance squadrons following the ground scouts, with the patrols galloping away to the flanks. Brigade after brigade cantered on over the rolling sandy hills. Swords and lances flashed in the morning light, the horses were restless to get away, the men's faces were tense with the eager excitement of a great moment. The infantry were everywhere busy dealing with prisoners, but stopped to cheer proudly as the cavalry cantered past. No more picturesque spectacle of war can be imagined. The horsemen raced down on the already beaten Turks, who had fled from the shock of the infantry advance. There were no forward reserves to meet, no further trench systems to be breached. The cavalry advanced rapidly onward towards the Plain of Esdraelon, meeting with little resistance. Occasional groups of flying enemy immediately surrendered when they saw the horsemen bearing down on them at a gallop, and before the morning hours were over a long series of surrenders had begun which continued day after day of the cavalry advance. The

mounted troops were scarcely well started before they were followed by many batteries of artillery, again followed by interminable lines of transport columns, both wheel and camel. Wherever the advance swept supplies followed close behind, though the cavalry was covering something like 40 to 50 miles per day, back and forth across country. Each horse carried man and three days' rations. They rode light, one blanket per man with no tents or waterproofs, and the pace was controlled only by the limit of horse endurance. They rode on through the night of the 19th/20th to the Plain of Esdraelon, and at daybreak on the 20th Nazareth was entered before the garrison of 3,000 and the residents of that old town were well awake. The railway junction of El Affule was taken, the crossing of the Jordan near Beisan was seized by the evening, and by midday on the 21st the retreat of the whole Turkish Army west of the Jordan was almost cut off. So rapid had been the cavalry advance that on the 20th a German aeroplane from the north landed at El Affule, not knowing that the place had passed into British hands.

The infantry divisions in the hill country had a harder time, both from the rough nature of the ground and also because they were advancing against strongly fortified and wired positions, garrisoned by more determined troops. The 53rd Division had duly carried out its preliminary advance on the night of the 18th/19th, but the main advance upon Nablus did not begin till the night of the 19th/20th after the success of the coastal attack was fully assured. The 10th Division were opposed by German units, but all along the line resistance was broken down, and by the evening of the 21st most of the heavy infantry fighting in the hill sector was well over.

Chaytor's force in the Jordan valley had kept secure the right flank and our river-crossings, watching for any withdrawal of the enemy and ready to meet any counter-attack from this quarter. The Turks on the Jordan line soon began to show signs of weakening, and the British West Indians among others helped to hasten their retreat. On the 20th of September the 1st Battalion of the British West Indies Regiment under heavy shell fire captured two important hill spurs dominating a Turkish position, and on the 22nd, after a 16-mile night march, the Trinidad company of this regiment, under Major A. E. Harrigan, went into action on the right of

the Auckland Mounted Rifles and, capturing the high ground overlooking the river near Jisr Ed Damye, carried the important bridge-head at that place.<sup>1</sup> For this enterprise Major Harrigan was awarded the D.S.O., and various honours were won by other ranks of this regiment during these Jordan operations.

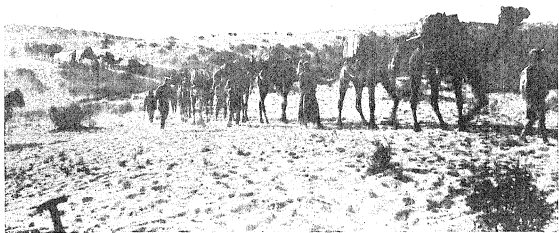
We had bottled up the enemy's western army on the south, west, and north sides, and the Anzac Division, two-thirds Australian and one-third New Zealand troops, with a composite infantry brigade of West Indians and Royal Fusiliers,<sup>2</sup> now moved up the Jordan valley to close the trap entirely on the eastern side. Their task was a difficult one, the enemy's guns still dominated the narrow stretches of ground in the valley and had to be silenced. The Turks were swiftly moving for such crossings as were still open, but the Anzacs moving faster gained the fords, and the western army was now completely closed in.

Forty hours after the big advance began, on the evening of the second day, the Turkish troops abandoned guns, transport, and all impedimenta. They left behind or destroyed all their aircraft as they swarmed along the Nablus road trying to get away. Our machines, flying low, did terrible execution with bombs and machine-gun fire. The roads for miles were blocked with dead animals and the wrecked vehicles of the fugitive columns. In many places they were quite impassable for our pursuing troops. Then the enemy left the roads and came across country to surrender by thousands. On the evening of the second day General Chauvel, while directing the operations round Megiddo on the site of ancient Armageddon, in one hour, with the 3rd Light Horse Brigade, intercepted an enemy force heading for Jenin to the north, and captured over 7,000 prisoners. Firm resistance was sometimes met with. In one case, for instance, a group of nine Germans fought to the death against two of our machine guns at 60 yards range. Indeed, nearly all the determined opposition which our mounted troops encountered on the long ride to Damascus was by Germans or under German command.

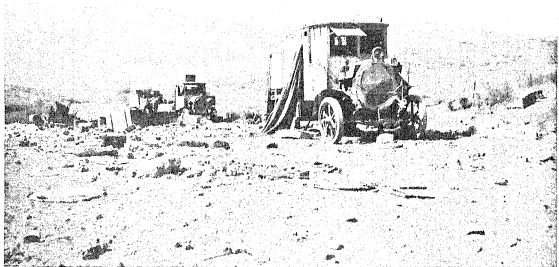
The deplorable state of the Turkish troops from which all morale seemed to have vanished was not without cause. Their

<sup>1</sup> See also vol. ii, pp. 337-8 and vol. iii, p. 378.

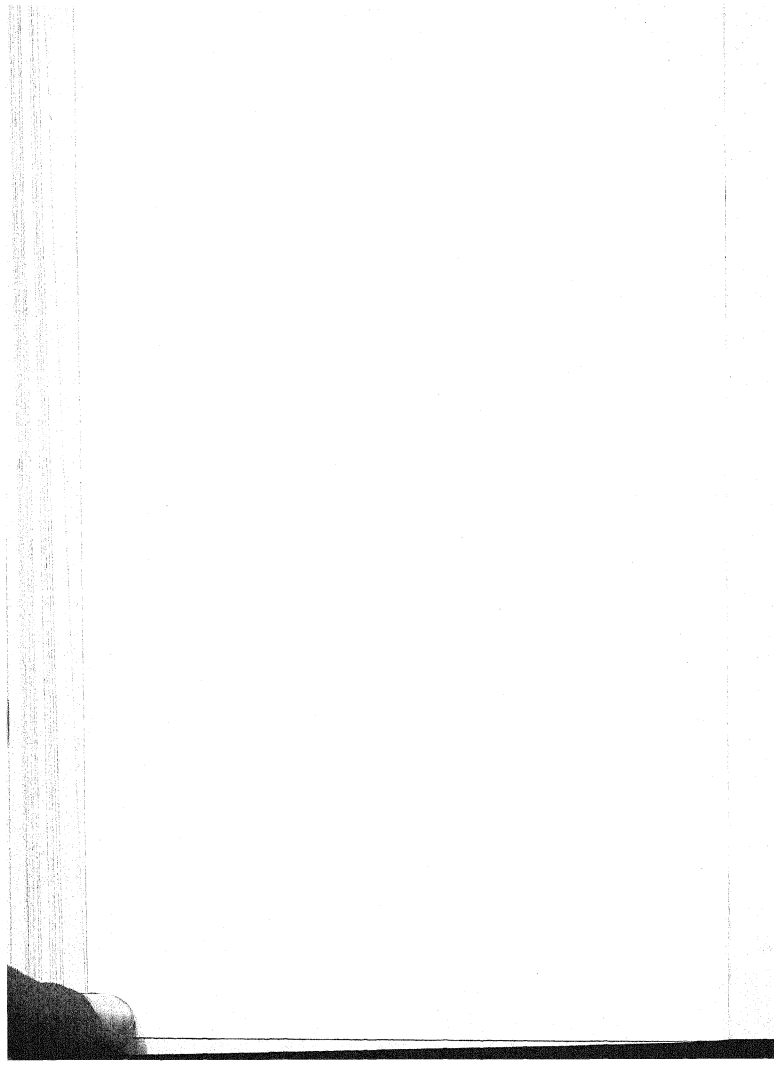
<sup>2</sup> The 38th and 39th Battalions. These were Jewish troops.



CAMEL TRANSPORT COMING INTO CAMP



ABANDONED TURKISH TRANSPORT





columns had been moving in retreat along roads that passed through narrow mountain defiles. Some of them were 2 miles in length, and when deep in these narrow valleys the Turks were attacked by our airmen. Flying low, our machines rained down bombs on the leading troops and vehicles of each column, blocking further progress, then turning they raked the enemy with machine-gun fire until ammunition was exhausted, and hurrying back for more they returned to the slaughter. Some machines made four trips in one day to carry on this bloody work. Blocked in front and rear, marked by flaming petrol and wrecked lorries, the roads were like shambles. Among the debris in the passes were parts of 100 guns, between 800 and 900 wagons, lorries, water-carts, travelling kitchens, and other material. Infantry transport and guns were intermingled in hopeless confusion, and the horror of the scenes was beyond description.

The various services of our army worked in perfect accord, and movements were controlled and timed with wonderful precision. The infantry drove the enemy from fortified positions, the cavalry cut off avenues of escape, and the airmen rained down bombs from above. For hours and hours this punishment went on until a brave and hard-fighting Turkish army was turned into a shell-shocked rabble of crazed, starving refugees, without rations, water, or transport, without arms, ammunition, or leadership to make a stand. They fled to the plains only to meet the swords and lances of our horsemen, to whose astonishment they surrendered without a show of resistance. Until the cavalry learned what havoc had been wrought in the hill passes, they could not understand the tragic state of these prisoners. The Royal Air Force had completed the victory. Without it victory would no doubt have been achieved and the power of the Turkish Army would have been broken, but our losses would have been great and the enemy's rear-guard resistance stubborn and long protracted.

Samaria was safely in our hands, on the 23rd Haifa was taken by Indian horsemen of the 5th Cavalry Division, and on the same day troops of the same division took Acre. Before Haifa had fallen, Chaytor's troops had crossed the Jordan and were moving eastward on their way towards Es Salt and Amman. On the 24th the New Zealand Mounted Rifles Brigade once more took Es Salt, and on the 25th the Australian

Light Horse and the Canterbury Rifles captured Amman. The Turkish forces to the east were already cut off from their supplies by quick-moving Arab horsemen who had severed the railway line and stopped all movement southward from Damascus.

Having accounted for Acre and Haifa, the Indian horsemen and British Yeomanry of the 5th Cavalry Division hurried across Palestine to join with the Australian Mounted Division in a race northward to Damascus, to prevent the escape of some 20,000 Turkish troops who were retreating from Deraa. The 4th Light Horse Brigade of the Australian Mounted Division had one of the stiffest fights of the whole campaign on September 24th in an attack on Samakh at the southern end of the Sea of Galilee, in which the 3rd Light Horse Brigade co-operated. In casualties this was their most expensive fight owing to the brave stand made by German machine gunners. On the 27th the ride for Damascus began. Past the blue waters of Lake Galilee the Australians pushed on, south of Lake Hule. They were held up at various points, but in spite of opposition and in spite of the fact that each horse carried on an average a load of 250 lb., they maintained a rapid pace.

As the Light Horse regiments came in view of the rich fertile plains of Damascus they saw the Turkish columns from Deraa some 8 miles away, nearly all of whom were soon to be captured. By the evening of the 30th of September Damascus had been enveloped.

A column of the enemy was fleeing to the north-west through the steep and narrow defile of Abana, in which confined space passes the road and railway line to Beirut and a swift mountain torrent. The banks are heavily covered with shrubbery and green, the river winds from one side to the other of the narrow valley, and both railway and road cross and recross it at frequent intervals. On either side the cliffs rise steeply to the desert plains. A small force of Australian Light Horsemen were hurried forward on the 30th to waylay this column in the narrow defile. They were from the 3rd and 5th Australian Light Horse Brigades, and were perched like mountain bandits in pockets of the cliff while German machine gunners, fighting to a finish, fired from tops of wagons and lorries. Three hundred and seventy enemy officers and men fell among the dying horses

and overturned wagons in the tumult of this sharp fight, and no further attempt was made by Turkish columns to escape by that road. Thousands were now streaming north by the Aleppo road, but early on the following morning, the 1st of October, the 3rd Light Horse Brigade was hot-foot in pursuit. The German machine gunners with these columns again made a brave stand, but with little effect against the impetuous charge of the Light Horsemen. The same squadron that in 1916 had made the raid on Jifjaffa, riding out from Ismailia under Major W. H. Scott to strike the first offensive blow in the Sinai desert, rode in this charge on the Aleppo road.

The first troops into Damascus on the 1st of October were a party of West Australians, who found their way there almost by accident. These same troops had been the first to enter Jerusalem. The 3rd Light Horse Brigade, commanded by Brigadier-General Wilson, had spent the night of the 30th September/1st October in the Abana Gorge after the attack on the Turkish column caught in that valley. They were to move at daybreak to seize the Aleppo road north of Damascus. Scouts sent out to find some track across country to the north of the town reported that no way could be found. Time was of the utmost importance, and with the scout troop leading the way it was found that the only possible route now lay through the city of Damascus itself. General Wilson had no means of knowing definitely whether the city was still occupied by the enemy or not, so a bold sporting chance was at once taken. As the scouts advanced into the town, along a narrow road beside the river, there was a sudden burst of machine-gun fire. No one was hit and the check to the scouts allowed the advance squadron to come up. A few sharp words of command, and away the regiments went at a gallop. Within a few hundred yards were thousands of Turks. The sudden surprising rush of cavalry was over in a few moments, some shots followed, and the sound of them was mingled with an increasing roar of applause from the civilian population, as the horsemen galloped past and safely away. They rode through the streets, the excited people fleeing to make way for them. Then came another burst of firing which hit nobody, and it was learned afterwards that this was firing in the air by the native Arabs, to express their joy at the first sign of deliverance from Turkish rule. Before the Town Hall the leading regiment pulled up

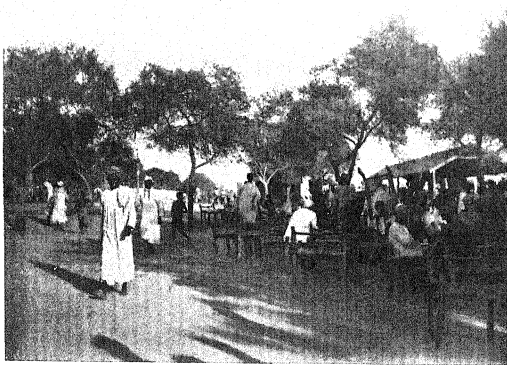
as if on parade. Here an immense crowd had assembled which instantly broke into the wildest demonstrations of joy. Three of the Australian officers, armed with revolvers, quickly entered the building and asked to see the Turkish Governor of Damascus. They were at once admitted and saw a quiet, middle-aged, courteous Turkish gentleman, who with great calmness and dignity asked to know their wishes. He was informed that a very large British cavalry force was on its way to enter and occupy Damascus, and that he would be held strictly responsible for the safety of all life and property, and the maintenance of just laws and order. He most courteously replied that the wishes of the British authorities would be respected in every way, begged the officers to believe that the street firing was honestly intended as an expression of joy at their arrival, and most warmly asked the Australian officers to accept his personal hospitality. Reliable guides were at once forthcoming, and the regiment hurried forward. As the Australians rode on through the streets they were overwhelmed with such honours as eastern customs can bestow on conquering heroes. Choice fruits were pressed into their hands, they were half smothered in perfumes, and gaily dressed people followed them in close-packed crowds, hanging to their stirrups. Every man was well supplied with the best of cigars and cigarettes, every window was crowded with gaily dressed and smiling women.

The Australian Mounted Division was forging still northward towards Aleppo when the Armistice with Turkey was signed. Homs was the farthest north which had then been reached by the Division. A year afterwards the writer saw some Australian troops again in Constantinople, and Australian Engineers were then building roads and attending to the cemeteries on the Gallipoli Peninsula. Before the end of 1919 not more than a few dozen men from the southern seas remained in the Near East.

PART III  
ADEN



THE CAMEL MARKET, ADEN



SCENE AT SHEIKH OTHMAN

## ADEN

*By C. T. Atkinson*

THE entry of Turkey into the war brought her into immediate contact with a British land frontier not in Egypt only but also at the other end of the Red Sea. Uncertain and precarious as was the Turkish hold on much of Arabia, at Perim and Aden, points of vital importance through their strategical position at the southern entrance to the Red Sea, the British Empire marched with the Turkish in a part of Arabia where Turkish troops were present in force. Perim, though an island, lies within artillery range of the Sheikh Saad peninsula at the south-west corner of Arabia and Great Britain had established a protectorate over the Arab tribes of the Aden 'hinterland' and regarded the coast of Arabia from Perim to Muscat as within her sphere of influence. The Sultan of Oman, too, was under treaty obligations to Great Britain, and an Indian battalion was actually stationed at his capital, Muscat, finding detachments for the protection of Jask, Bander Abbas, and Charbar, the cable stations on the northern shores of the Persian Gulf in which Britain was interested. Aden also had a garrison found from troops on the Indian establishment, the Aden Brigade being a part of the Indian Army, while its Resident and Commander-in-Chief was under the orders of the Indian Government. Thus, while its strategical situation made the safety of Aden a vital matter to the whole Empire, India had a very special interest in the fortress and its concerns.

What made the position at Aden so full of possibilities was the presence in the Yemen, about the most fertile portion of Arabia, of a Turkish Army Corps which might prove troublesome to Aden, where the garrison, which consisted of only one British and one Indian battalion with no field or mountain artillery and for cavalry only the Aden Troop, barely 100 strong, was quite unequal to its dual tasks of defending the fortress and safeguarding the friendly tribes of the Aden hinterland against the Turks. The Protectorate was exposed to Turkish attack, and should the Turks endeavour to cajole

or coerce the Arabs into quitting our side the situation in the hinterland might become very serious. It was then the existence of this hinterland and its liability to attack which so greatly complicated the situation. Aden, in fact, was not merely one of the most important 'defended ports' of the Empire, a great coaling station and port of call, the base for warships operating in the southern portion of the Red Sea and in the western portion of the Indian Ocean, but the coaling station and naval base could only be secured by holding positions on the mainland, and the commander at Aden was thus confronted with many of the problems and responsibilities of a frontier brigade command in India. As a 'defended port' Aden's importance was great but its dangers slight. As long as the *Emden* and *Königsberg* were still at large Aden had to be on the watch for them, though light cruisers could have done little against so strong a station; but when those vessels had been disposed of there was nothing to be apprehended at sea. On the land side, however, there was far more danger of trouble, though in a struggle of the magnitude of the war of 1914-18 the defence of the Aden Protectorate was not a consideration of first importance. But, with the garrison and the staff of the station both barely adequate to peace requirements, neither could be expected to cope with all the new work and new possibilities in which war involved them. There was work for four times the staff officers available, and so weak a garrison was debarred from anything beyond the most passive defence. But it was doubtful if in any case a mere passive defence would be possible. On the borders of the Aden Protectorate Turkish forces were reported before the end of October to be collecting in strength, and at Sheikh Saad opposite Perim their presence was a serious menace. Advantage was therefore taken of the arrival at Aden on its way to Egypt of General Cox's 29th Indian Infantry Brigade,<sup>1</sup> to land it at Sheikh Saad in order to drive off the Turkish forces and demolish the works which they had erected. This was successfully done on November 10th. Covered by the guns of H.M.S. *Edinburgh* a landing was effected, the Turkish entrenchments were stormed, 6 guns were taken, and the Turkish troops were dispersed and driven inland. Next day, after destroying the

<sup>1</sup> This was the brigade which subsequently went to Gallipoli. See below, part iv, chap. vi.



entrenchments and magazines, the brigade re-embarked and continued its journey to Egypt, though the 23rd Sikh Pioneers, who had been present at the operation, were added to the Aden garrison. This welcome reinforcement allowed the detachment at Perim to be strengthened, but still left the Aden garrison too weak to allow of active operations in the 'hinterland' or even of a repetition of the stroke at Sheikh Saad. That place was subsequently reoccupied by the Turks and from it they continued to threaten Perim. Moreover, the substitution of a partly trained Territorial unit, the Breconshire Battalion of the S.W.B., for the Regular infantry battalion hitherto in the garrison was an additional argument against an offensive.

During the early part of 1915 matters continued quiet at Aden, though the other little British garrison on Arabian soil, the 95th Infantry and 102nd (Bombay) Grenadiers at Muscat, had a sharp fight in January when the unrest which had been growing in Oman for some time past, partly owing to Turkish intrigues, culminated in an attack in force on the British posts covering Muscat. The 95th and 102nd thereupon took the offensive with success, and sallying out dispersed their assailants who lost heavily and fled in disorder. But despite this success<sup>1</sup> it was considered expedient to increase the British garrison at Muscat by half a battalion, and therefore on its way from Egypt to reinforce General Barrett in Mesopotamia the 30th Indian Infantry Brigade dropped half the 126th Baluchistan Infantry at Aden and half at Muscat. Even these outposts, far removed from the main theatres, involved in war additional demands on resources already over-taxed.

The situation at Aden was not a little complicated by political considerations. The Turkish hold on Southern Arabia was none too secure; among the Arabs there existed a latent hostility to the Turks, which only ten or twelve years earlier had assumed the proportions of a serious revolt, requiring large forces for its suppression, and it was therefore expedient to tread delicately. To have enforced with absolute rigour a naval blockade of the Arabian ports would have hit the Arabs harder than the Turks and have tended to drive them to make common cause with the Turks; to capture or destroy

<sup>1</sup> There was no further trouble at Muscat, though a garrison had to be retained there throughout the war.

at sight every dhow or other coasting vessel would have meant injuring three potential friends for one actual enemy. There were indications that the Turks were trying to excite the Arabs to an attack on the Aden Protectorate, but the Arabs were reported to be unwilling to stir unless they saw large Turkish forces employed in the enterprise or actual signs of the promised German naval co-operation. To balance Turkish intrigues efforts were made to come to an understanding with the chief Arab enemies of the Turks, and in April 1915 a treaty was arranged with the Idrisi of Sabia, one of the principal rulers of Western Arabia, whose territories lay in the Asir district on the Red Sea north of the Yemen.

However, as the summer of 1915 drew on it became clear that the Turks were intending to attack the Protectorate and, as the British failure to undertake a more active policy was discouraging the local Arabs, steps had to be taken to organize a movable column out of the Aden garrison, including two batteries of guns to be carried on camels and manned by the R.G.A. Early in June the available field force was somewhat diminished by the necessity of finding garrisons for several Red Sea islands, Kamaran and others, which, partly for naval, partly for political reasons, it had been deemed expedient to occupy. Soon afterwards the threatened Turkish offensive took definite shape. The Turks had already been reported in force at Sheikh Saad; on June 13th they shelled Perim at long range, and then on the night of June 14th attempted to land on the island. A strong force crossed from the mainland in dhows, but the 23rd Pioneers, who formed the garrison, were on the alert and the assailants were beaten off with loss. Notwithstanding this repulse the pressure against the friendly Arabs of the Protectorate increased so much that the Aden Troop had to be sent out to Lahej to support the Abdali Sultan, and then orders had to be issued to the movable column to proceed there also. It was on July 3rd that the column started out for the advanced post at Sheikh Othman *en route* to Lahej. The normal duties of the garrison, the detachment of nearly half the 109th Infantry to Kamaran, and the need for finding drafts from the 23rd Pioneers and 126th Baluchistans for linked units in France had considerably reduced the force available, and the column was little over a thousand strong. Moreover, the weather was exceedingly hot even for July at

Aden ; the march out from Aden to Sheikh Othman proved most exhausting, and a good many men, especially of the Territorial battalion, had to be left behind sick when the column moved on early on July 4th. Sheikh Othman is 19 miles from Lahej, and what with the fearful heat, the dreadful thirst, and the rough going—there was nothing that could even by courtesy be called a road—the troops suffered terribly. A night march after a day's rest at Sheikh Othman they might have managed, but not a move by day without more rest. Men soon began to go down with heat-stroke and to fall out in numbers. Indeed, the main column had halted some miles from Lahej and was almost incapable of further movement when, about midday, firing was heard at Lahej, which the advance-guard, the 109th Infantry and four 10-pounder guns, had reached before dawn. An effort had then to be made to get the troops forward, but the majority arrived at Lahej completely exhausted, and from the first the hospitals were crowded with prostrated men, indeed a large part of the force was out of action from the heat before serious fighting began.

The first firing had been nothing more than bickering between the Aden Troop and some Arabs, but early in the evening the Arabs began advancing in force, with Turks in support, and before long a brisk action was in progress, Turks and Arabs pressing hard against the large walled garden in which the camp was situated. They had several guns with them and shelled the camp vigorously, besides making repeated rushes. These were met by counter-attacks by the 109th and the Baluchis, while about 100 of the Brecknocks, all who were capable of manning the defences, kept off the attacks on the left by musketry, and just about daylight the Turkish pressure ceased. Meanwhile news had reached Lahej that the native drivers of the camel transport had bolted on hearing firing, cutting the cords of their loads and letting the camels go loose. Reserve ammunition, food, and above all water, had thus been lost ; the 15-pounder battery camels had also broken down and the guns were stuck in the sand 4 miles from Lahej. The situation therefore was critical. The Arab friendlies had disappeared to a man and, though there was water at Lahej, the position was quite untenable without reinforcements or reserve ammunition. Orders were accordingly issued to

evacuate Lahej, and about 5 a.m. on July 5th the retirement began.

The staff had been endeavouring to rally the men of the main column who had fallen out, and most of them had been collected during the night at the Bir Nasir wells where a camp was marked out, water issued, and the party to some extent reorganized. On this spot the Lahej troops retired, the rear-guard of the 109th Infantry, who came in about 8 a.m., bringing some 40 Turkish prisoners who had been taken in the fighting at Lahej. The retreating troops had not been pressed, which was fortunate, for the sufferings of the retirement had equalled those of the advance, indeed the men were more tired, weaker from want of food, and had even less water. Many more fell out, but luckily the Administrative Staff at Aden by great exertions had managed to send out camels and motors with water and this saved many lives. That evening the column started back for Aden; once again there was no Turkish pursuit, and by 9 o'clock on July 7th the rear-guard was back at Sheikh Othman. Here it was proposed to hold on as the position was essential to the Aden water-supply, but the transport difficulties led to a decision to evacuate Sheikh Othman and also to bring the troops<sup>1</sup> back to the Khor Maksar lines at the isthmus where, with a British warship on either flank, the Turks could certainly be held at bay.

For the moment it looked as if the Turks would follow up the retirement by an attack in force, and while applications for aid were made to India and to Egypt, reinforcements on their way to France in the transport *Teesta*, including a double company for the 9th Gurkhas, were hurriedly disembarked, and another transport with some Australian Light Horse was also detained. However, the Turks contented themselves with occupying Sheikh Othman and cutting off the water-supply, throwing the garrison and town on the supply from condensers. On July 8th half the 108th Infantry, promised from India as a reinforcement before the advance to Lahej, arrived and ten days later came the 28th (Frontier Force) Brigade from Egypt with two Territorial Horse Artillery batteries and Major-General Sir G. Younghusband to take

<sup>1</sup> The casualties in action came to about 50 besides which there were over 30 deaths from heat-stroke, mostly in the Breconshire Battalion, and many more men were incapacitated from duty and had to be invalided.

command. He promptly decided that all that was necessary was to expel the Turks from Sheikh Othman, which was essential to the security of Aden, that anything further, such as the recovery of Lahej, would involve too large a force and would be strategically unjustifiable considering the far greater calls of other theatres of war and that at that season of the year the climatic conditions were all against protracted operations. This programme he proceeded to put into force. On July 21st the Frontier Force Brigade attacked Sheikh Othman and retook it after a sharp fight of which the 53rd Sikhs bore the brunt, having two British officers killed. The Turks were driven out and pursued for several miles, severe casualties being inflicted on them. The aqueduct and the water-supply were found to be uninjured.

After this successful action the Frontier Force Brigade was retained for some weeks at Aden, while the Sheikh Othman position was strengthened and made secure. Some reinforcements arrived from India, including a couple of squadrons of the 26th Light Cavalry, the 4th Buffs to relieve the exhausted Brecknocks, and a howitzer battery. In August the Frontier Force Brigade moved out to reconnoitre Waht and engaged the Turks, severely punishing a rather superior force, especially when it tried to follow up the retirement closely. However, the weather was too hot for sustained operations, and early in September the troops from Egypt began to return there, one battalion of the Frontier Force Brigade, the 62nd Punjabis, being retained at Aden to reinforce the garrison which was also further increased by the arrival of the Malay States Guides, whose services had been placed at the disposal of the Government by the Malay States.<sup>1</sup> Sir G. Younghusband left on September 10th after having handed over the command to Brigadier-General Price who had been selected to be Resident.

From September 1915 onwards the situation at Aden underwent but little substantial change. With all the commitments of the Empire in various quarters of the globe and all the calls on its still far from completely developed resources, military opinion was strongly against the opening up of a new theatre of war which, whatever might be the local arguments in its favour, could from a wider point of view only be regarded as a 'side show' and could not directly affect the main event of

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 387.

the war. Younghusband's brigade had made Aden safe; henceforward, while an 'active defence' was to be maintained and the Turks harried from time to time by reconnaissances in force and by patrol activities, any definite offensive for the recovery of the Protectorate was ruled out. Several of these reconnaissances led to sharp fighting and proved very successful, the presence of the two squadrons of cavalry proving a great asset to the garrison, though the Turks enjoyed a substantial superiority in artillery, both in the numbers and in the quality of their guns. In January 1916, for example, the movable column went out to Hatum, occupied it, and entrenched a position a mile further north mainly to draw a counter-attack. This was developed in force and was strongly pressed, the Turks getting within 400 yards but being then checked, though an attempt by the British cavalry to get round the Turkish flank was held up by the difficult ground. About 6 p.m. the Turks drew off, having lost heavily, 200 or so, while the British casualties were under 50, but they had developed such a heavy artillery fire that the commander of the movable column fell back after dark and did not attempt to retain the position occupied. All ranks, however, returned feeling that a distinct success had been scored. But the Turks, besides their superiority in artillery, decidedly outnumbered the force available for an offensive, which did not amount to 3,000, whereas in February 1916 the Turks in the Protectorate were put at 5,500 exclusive of Arabs. However, they made no attempt to attack with the exception of an advance in March against Imad, which had been occupied to keep open the coast road east of Aden. On this occasion they were severely handled, their retreat being nearly cut off by a column from Sheikh Othman.

In the summer of 1916 the Arab revolt led by the Sherif of Mecca altered the situation in Arabia. At last it seemed as if the situation was propitious for an advance from Aden. Naval opinion was strongly in its favour, and there was much to be said for it on political grounds. Our ally, the Idrisi, had relapsed into inactivity, justifying himself on the score of our inaction, but military considerations were against taking the offensive in July on grounds of climate, were equally against a limited offensive such as the occupation of Wabt and Fiyush, the intermediate line of positions between Aden and Lahej,

and demanded that if serious operations were to be undertaken in the cooler weather of the autumn a considerable force should be forthcoming. This was put by Major-General J. M. Stewart,<sup>1</sup> who had taken over the command in July when General Price was invalided, at an additional infantry brigade, at least twelve good field guns, and more engineers and other services. The War Committee accordingly decided that for the present an 'active defence' should be maintained, the Turkish outposts being harassed so as to prevent the Turks from withdrawing troops to other quarters, and that offensive operations should be postponed till such time as the anticipated success of General Smuts's operations in East Africa would have set free the Indian contingent serving in that country for work elsewhere. Approval was given for the extension to Robat, 3 miles farther out, of the railway already laid to Sheikh Othman, but again Aden had to remain quiet.

Actually the progress of General Smuts's campaign was not quite as rapid as had been hoped, and it soon appeared that the only units which could be spared from East Africa were either unsuitable by reason of their composition for employment in Arabia or were best suited for the lines of communication. India could spare no troops or the transport or hospitals required for any substantial offensive. Moreover, for some time the progress of the Sherif's movement was but slow, and the likelihood of his needing active aid involving the opening of a new theatre of operations north of Mecca was an additional argument against undertaking anything new at Aden. As a matter of fact the movement did serve to prevent Turkish reinforcements from reaching the Yemen,<sup>2</sup> and though the Turks in the Yemen seemed to have become more active with the idea of impressing the local Arabs, there was evidence that the Sherif's revolt had had the effect of preventing the development of a German scheme by which Turkish reinforcements under German leadership were to have been sent to Arabia to threaten Aden, stir up trouble in Abyssinia, the

<sup>1</sup> This was the officer who had commanded the first Indian troops sent to East Africa. See below, pp. 319-23, and vol. iv, pp. 158, &c.

<sup>2</sup> It was about this time that the story was told that on the Sherif's revolt breaking out a message was sent to the Turkish general in the Yemen, pointing out that his communications were cut and inquiring whether under those circumstances he had not better surrender, but that the Turk had replied what was the cutting of communications to him, he had never known a time when his communications were not cut.

Sudan and Somaliland, attack British commerce using the Red Sea by mines and other means, and generally create new difficulties for the Allies.

The abandonment of the projected offensive from Aden did not, however, mean that the work of the Aden garrison was in any way diminished. The strain continued to be heavy. An extensive position had to be held and improved, the constant scouting and patrolling was very exhausting and, inasmuch as the Turks had to be kept on the alert and prevented from withdrawing troops for use elsewhere, no relaxation of the pressure was possible. At the same time it was galling and irksome to have so often to demonstrate against Turkish positions and always to withdraw, a difficult task in thick scrub which gave the Turks and their Arab irregulars many chances in pursuit. The climate, too, was trying, though by care and good management the sick-rate was kept low. It proved necessary to relieve the Territorial battalion at short intervals; the Buffs stayed till January 1916 when the 4th D.C.L.I. relieved them, and the latter were moved to Egypt in February 1917 when the 6th East Surreys arrived to spend nearly a year at Aden, being in turn relieved by the 7th Hampshires in January 1918. There were fewer changes in the Indian units; the 109th Infantry for example remained in the garrison over three years, not being relieved till October 1917, the Malay States Guides were at Aden from October 1915 till about a year after the Armistice, and the 75th Carnatics, who had relieved the detachments of the 108th Infantry and 126th Baluchistans in January 1916, were retained after the reduction of the garrison to peace strength.

All through the second half of 1916 and 1917 the situation remained practically unchanged. The movable column made several reconnaissances in force and demonstrations, sometimes involving heavy fighting. In one of these—December 7th, 1916—the 75th Carnatics cleared Jabir and the 4th D.C.L.I. took Hatum after a sharp action in which the British casualties came to over 60 and those of the Turks and Arabs exceeded 150. This action led to the recall of a Turkish force which had been detached from Lahej and to the supersession of the Turkish commander, and was generally one of the most successful of these enterprises. On another occasion the 33rd Punjabis, who had arrived from Egypt early in 1916 and left in April



1917 for East Africa, carried out a highly successful landing on the coast near Musemir and destroyed a Turkish post there while on their way to East Africa.

The hope had been entertained by the garrison that in the autumn of 1917 more far-reaching operations would become possible, for the necessity of breaking off engagements and withdrawing was felt to be not a little 'ignominious and discouraging for the troops', but once again the decision of the higher authorities was against taking action on a large scale in a new theatre where no decisive blow could be dealt. However, the active defence and the patrols and raids, which were all that the Aden Field Force was permitted to undertake, harassed the Turks not a little. Between September 1917 and February 1918 nearly a dozen small actions were fought besides patrol encounters and minor skirmishes. Some of these led to really sharp fighting: once a party of Arabs worked up through the scrub to within 100 yards of some guns which were being withdrawn, and were only beaten off by a dashing bayonet charge on the part of a platoon of the 38th Dogras acting as escort to the guns. There was another very sharp fight at Darb in December, when some of the 7th Rajputs<sup>1</sup> were very hard pressed in retiring through thick scrub but kept the enemy at bay and extricated themselves successfully with the aid of the East Surreys and R.F.C. The addition of an R.F.C. detachment about this time was a substantial asset to the defence and produced a distinct effect. Co-operation with aircraft greatly increased the effectiveness of the British artillery, and in addition the aeroplanes made several raids on the Turkish camps, bombing them most successfully. The results were that the Turks changed their tactics and refused to be drawn into following up withdrawals. 'The aeroplanes have driven the Turks to ground,' it was reported, 'and it is difficult to draw them into any action without pushing home an attack; they offer no targets to the artillery.' Still they held their line in force, seemed amply provided with artillery, and showed no symptoms of retiring or becoming demoralized. These minor operations certainly established an ascendancy over the Turks, and inflicted on them casualties which con-

<sup>1</sup> This was one of the battalions which had been taken in Kut with Townshend and had been subsequently re-formed, and it was therefore largely composed of young soldiers.

siderably exceeded the British losses, the latter being less than 300 from August 1917 to February 1918, but it was annoying not to be able to improve opportunities and secure more definite results. In the summer of 1918, owing to the great heat, activity was almost limited to artillery bombardments, though the railway was pushed steadily forward, and one feature of interest was the beginning of the formation of a local unit from friendly Arabs, called the 1st Yemen Infantry. An influenza epidemic began in August and became really serious in November, when it rendered the force practically immobile and caused 175 deaths, but notwithstanding, one or two well-executed raids on Turkish posts and picquets were carried out. One of these, just before the Armistice, resulted in two companies of the 75th Carnatics being very closely pressed; they had waited in support of the cavalry who were hung up, and the Turks and Arabs pressed round them in the scrub, coming to close quarters. The guns were on the move and could do little to help, but the cavalry came back to the assistance of the infantry who behaved excellently, rallying when they reached a good position and beating their enemy off. The battalion had over 50 casualties, but by its steadiness it extricated itself from a tight place before the reinforcements who had been hurried forward could arrive and intervene.

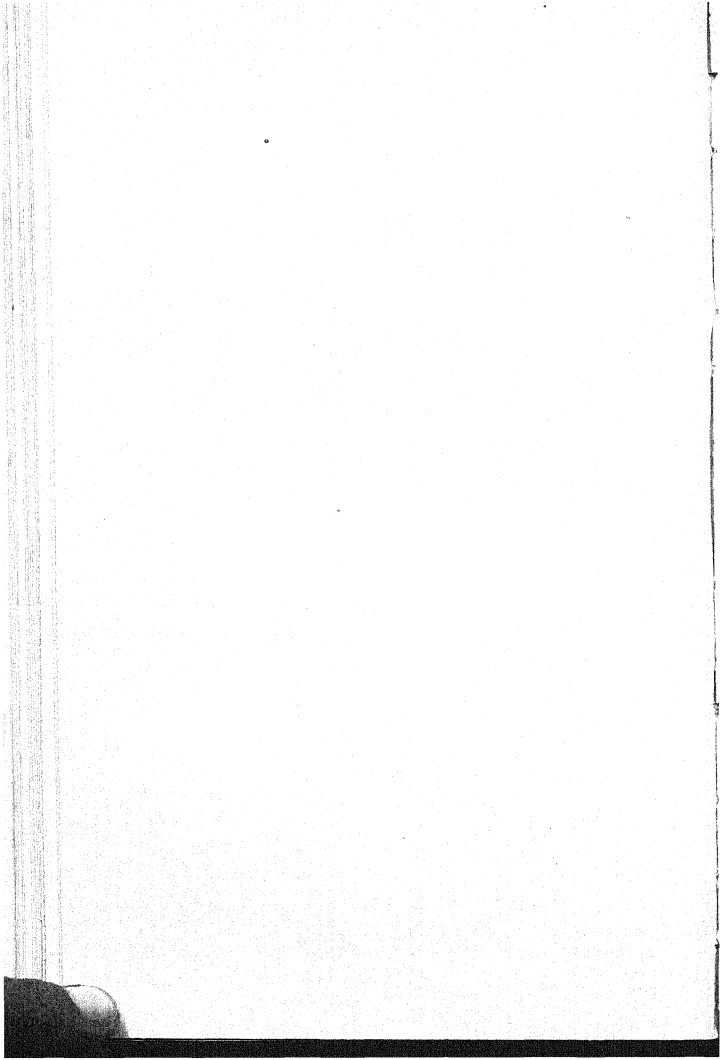
This was the last fight before the Armistice but not the last action for the Aden Field Force. Though officially informed of the Armistice the Turkish commanders in the Yemen seemed reluctant to carry out its terms and exhausted all the arts of procrastination. It was suspected that this was partly due to the intrigues of the Imam, and owing to the influenza epidemic it was impossible to take forcible measures to compel surrender. In December, however, the troops being again fit for action, it was decided to push the movable column out to Lahej, and at the same time to send a battalion by sea to Hodeida to demand the surrender of that post. The 2/101st Grenadiers, who had been sent from Egypt for the purpose, arrived off Hodeida on December 13th, and when the garrison refused to surrender were landed in the dark despite a rough sea and many difficulties. Next morning they attacked Hodeida from the north. The Turks and their Arab allies put up a stout resistance, and the Grenadiers had to fight their way through the town from house to house, and then to

assault and carry an entrenched position 200 yards farther south to which the enemy had retired. It was a smart little operation, reflecting great credit on the troops engaged who showed both dash and steadiness, and coupled with the advance of the main column to Lahej it produced the surrender of the Turks in the Yemen. By the middle of December the force round Lahej, well over 2,500 strong, a fine body of men well clothed, equipped, and supplied with ammunition, had laid down its arms, and after our troops at Hodeida had been reinforced by half the 7th Rajputs hostilities ceased there also and the Turks began to surrender in batches. There was no alacrity over the surrender, every possible excuse for delay being raised, but by the beginning of March 1919 the evacuation of the Turkish garrison was completed, another 4,100 having surrendered, and the demobilization of the Aden Field Force could be begun, though an additional battalion had to be retained in the garrison with another to hold Hodeida.

The operations of the Aden Field Force, though an inconsiderable 'side show' in a war of millions, have a certain measure of interest and even of importance. The virtual abandonment of the Protectorate after the Lahej affair of July 1915 involved some loss of local prestige and influence, but of the essential soundness of the policy laid down by Sir G. Younghusband in 1915 and pursued to the end of the war there can be little question. To advance to Lahej, to drive the Turks out of the Protectorate, would in all probability not have been final. The Turks would still have held the Yemen. A larger force must have been locked up at Lahej than was needed to hold Sheikh Othman, or a still larger force must have been utilized to conquer the Yemen, an outlying province of the Turkish Empire whose loss would have been hardly felt at Constantinople and would have had no effect at all on Berlin. Even if the Yemen could have been conquered in 1916—by suspending operations in East Africa—it must have been garrisoned until the end of the war and no economy of forces would have resulted; the Yemen would have been for the Indian Army what Salonika was described as being for the Allies, 'an internment camp'. The political difficulties with the Arabs which the conquest of the Yemen would have involved might also have been of far-reaching effect. For the units whose lot it was to hold Aden for the Empire during the war the decision

to remain on the defensive meant much hard and thankless work ; there were no easy rewards and honours to be picked up at Aden, there were many hardships and discomforts to endure in a trying and enervating climate. A resourceful and well-led enemy had to be faced who played his part skilfully, did his best to keep a large force of our troops occupied and to divert them from other theatres, fought stubbornly and was not to be lightly encountered. Towards the end of the war, in particular, the garrison was largely composed of young soldiers from India without much experience, and it is greatly to their credit that in so many minor encounters and actions there was a remarkable absence of 'regrettable incidents'—in the Lahej affair of July 1915 it was by the weather not by the Turks that the reverse was inflicted—and that the spirit of the troops should have been so well maintained. 'Side show' though they were, the Aden operations have their lessons, and the troops who saw service there between 1914 and 1918 did their share for the Empire in the greatest of its wars.





PART IV  
INDIA

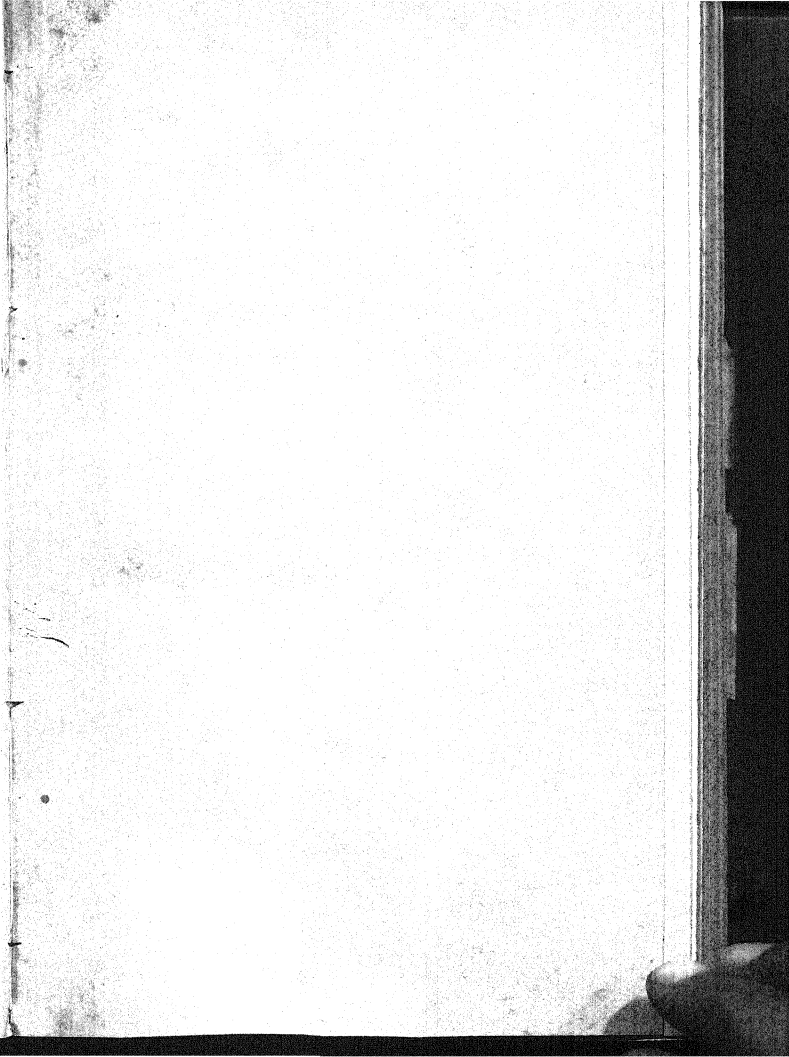
BY

SIR FRANCIS YOUNGHUSBAND, K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E.

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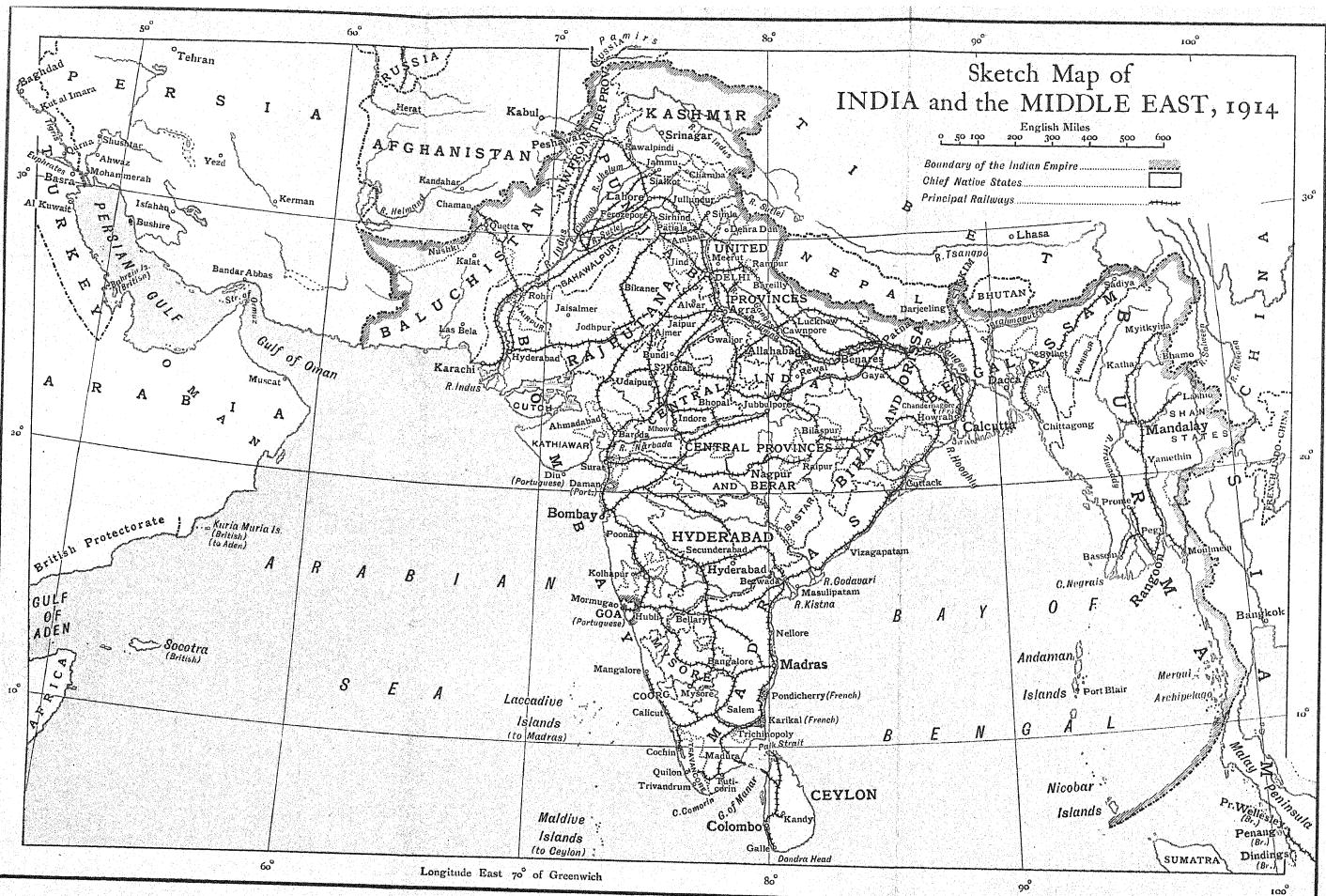




# Sketch Map of INDIA and the MIDDLE EAST, 1914

English Miles  
0 50 100 200 300 400 500 600

Boundary of the Indian Empire  
Chief Native States  
Principal Railways



## CHAPTER I

### INDIA BEFORE THE WAR

'A PLACE in the sun' was what Germany was incessantly striving to attain, and what she hoped to gain as a result of the war. She felt cramped in the centre of Europe and wanted to be out on the sea and in the sun. The Berlin-Baghdad Railway had a remarkable attraction for the Germans; this however was not because they had any wish or intention to remain in Baghdad as their final destination, but because Baghdad was a stepping-stone to something beyond—because in the distance was India.

India was attractive to them not only through the glamour of its sunshine and its Oriental profusion and magnificence, but for more solid and substantial reasons as well. Under the sun of India can be grown products which will not mature in chillier Germany. All tropical countries have a value for countries of the temperate zone. For the material needs of European civilization European countries must be able to procure certain raw materials and articles of food which can only be produced in tropical climates, and European countries also derive great benefit from an extensive market for the sale of their manufactures. In both these respects India possessed advantages for Germany. It produced what Germany could not produce, and it furnished an excellent market for German manufactures.

Germany could grow her own wheat and barley and also sugar. But of cotton she had the greatest need, as well as of jute, rubber, tea, and coffee. It was of high importance to her that she should be able to procure for her own use whatever India could spare of these valuable tropical products.

Then, again, India had before the war a population of 315 million people. The great mass of these are extremely poor, and their wants are few in comparison with the needs of European peoples. But their very numbers make the sum-total of their needs reach a considerable figure. They dress themselves for the most part in cotton clothes, so that they

require large quantities of cotton goods, and the development of so vast and so thickly populated a country creates a necessity for machinery and implements of all kinds, rails, and railway engines. So there was in India a large demand for those very articles of manufacture which Germany produced.

Now Germany before the war had free access to India. Her merchants could come and buy the products of India as freely as any British merchant, and they had in fact great business houses in Calcutta, Bombay, and other towns. Germans could also run and operate mines; and it was found at the commencement of the war that Germany had a practical monopoly of the wolfram mines at Tavoy in Burma from which tungsten for the hardening of steel is extracted. Germans could trade, reside, acquire land for business purposes, and sell the manufactures of Germany to the Indian people with no more let or hindrance than they would have experienced if they were Englishmen. In the old days of British rule in India the policy had been to exclude other Europeans from the trade of the country. It was the traditional policy of the times. Where Dutch or French had gained access they had excluded the British, and where the British gained access they excluded the Dutch and the French. But we had long given up that ancient policy; for many years past German trade was admitted to India on the same terms as British trade, and what small import and export duties there were were imposed for revenue purposes only. No discrimination whatever was made against the Germans.

German traders had made good use of their opportunities. The trade of Germany with India had increased astonishingly in recent years. In 1870 it was of insignificant amount. By 1914 it was beginning to rival the trade between India and Great Britain itself. In the valuable hide trade the Germans had by their energy and enterprise secured for themselves almost a monopoly. A German Consul-General of high status in the German Diplomatic Service was established in Calcutta, and made for himself a position of influence and importance.

When Germany had such a favourable position in India; when her business men were making such splendid use of the advantages they enjoyed; when their position was improving year by year; when the Germans could without any of the burdens and responsibilities of governing India come there and

purchase in an open market the tropical products they needed and sell their manufactures, it is difficult to see what more they could possibly require. They appeared to have the game in their own hands. By peaceful penetration they seemed to be getting all that they needed. Evidently, however, they thought they were *not* getting all they might get. They scrutinized the British administration and saw its defects. They saw that India was not a half or a quarter developed; that there were still great areas of land uncultivated which might be made productive; that owing to wasteful and inefficient agricultural methods the yield per acre on the land in cultivation was only half what it might be; that the forests were inadequately exploited; that the minerals had hardly been touched; and that communications were insufficiently provided. All this they saw, and they believed that if for the sluggish British administration there were substituted an energetic, efficient, masterful, pushful German administration the production of India could be doubled, trebled, or quadrupled. In addition matters could be so arranged that Germans could enjoy special advantages in competition with traders of other nations and wax rich in comparison with them. All these material advantages they saw and above them all was the glamour which would come from the conquest of India. The splendour of the German Emperor would be mightily increased if he was also the Emperor of India, and if England were reduced to the status of Holland.

Nor was the supplanting of the British by the Germans such a fanciful dream as might now appear. Not only Germans but even many Englishmen believed that if England were seriously threatened India would strive to rid herself of British rule. The British position in India was, to all appearances, extremely precarious. There were only 77,000 British troops in a country of 315 million inhabitants. Moreover this minute garrison was dependent for reinforcement upon a line of communication thousands of miles in length and exposed to attack at its very starting-point as well as at several points on the way from England to India. Half a century previously Indians had risen in arms against the British. It seemed a matter of course that if a Power so strong as Germany—strong by sea and strong by land—threatened England at the heart, the Indians would instinctively seize the God-sent opportunity

to rid themselves for ever of their alien rulers. The tie which bound India to the Empire was brittle and would snap, the Germans thought, and there was much that had been transpiring in India in the years immediately preceding the war which would confirm them in this view.

In every country there is a certain amount of disaffection. There is always some section which is discontented with the existing form of government and which agitates to change it. India is no exception. There was never a time when among some sections of its huge population disaffection did not exist—now in a high degree of intensity now in a low, now in one form now in another. Disaffection always has existed and always will. It is against human nature to expect that 315 million people of different religions, different degrees of civilization, different races, will always—or ever—be absolutely content. Discontent and disaffection must always be expected in some quarter or other—sometimes among the Hindus, sometimes among the Mohammedans; sometimes among the most backward, most ignorant and most prone to unreasoning excitement, and sometimes among the most advanced and most highly educated; sometimes it will be inarticulate and inactive and sometimes it will be loud-voiced and eruptive.

In the half dozen years before the war this always existing disaffection was very active and very vociferous. It was a period of 'unrest'. The latent dislike of foreign rule was aroused, and the mainspring of the unrest was antagonism to the fundamental principles upon which Western society has been built up. For a century we had honestly and conscientiously, and with the best possible intentions, striven to better the conditions of the Indian peoples, to educate them, to fit them to take part in the government of their own country. We were imbued with the most worthy motives. We really meant well by the people of India, and we were convinced that what was good for us must be good for them. But the result was not fortunate. From what Indians had imbibed from our education, from what they picked up of Western civilization, from the closer contact with Europe which quicker and easier communication brought about, an antagonism to all the principles upon which Western society is built sprang up, and this antagonism was the mainspring of the unrest. Novel ideas, new needs, fresh grievances, unaccustomed standards,

strange models were constantly being brought forward and the Indian gorge rose up against them.

While portions of India were thus beginning to seethe and foment, an outside event occurred which heated Indians to boiling-point. A Power classed in the first rank of European Powers was beaten fairly and squarely—on sea as well as by land—by an Asiatic Power. Russia, the great Power which had so long been a threat to India, was beaten by Japan. If 30 million Japanese could do such a deed, what might not 300 million Indians do! They could at least get rid of the few thousand Englishmen who dominated India. Hopes ran high. A section of the people became frankly revolutionary. They preached the doctrine of deeds—of assassination, dynamite, outrages, dacoities, terrorism all round. Viceroy, civil officers, British men and women, anywhere and everywhere were to be bombed, shot, stabbed till British rule was cleared out of India. This doctrine had a special fascination for youth—with the results which will be presently narrated.

The centres of this active disaffection were, firstly, in the Bombay Presidency, among the Mahratta Brahmins, and secondly in Bengal.

The Mahratta Brahmins of the Deccan had in pre-British days wielded great power, and if they had been able to maintain their power over their generals, the original Scindias and Holkars, they might have succeeded the Moghuls in the Empire of India. They were unable to check and control their generals. The Mahratta power crumpled up and decayed, and it was the British and not the Mahrattas who succeeded the Moghuls. But these Mahratta Brahmins are able, well-educated, and masterful men. They remember their former glories, and in these years before the great war there were not a few who dreamed of a time when those glories would be renewed.

Foremost among these was Bal Gangadhar Tilak. He was an Indian of the Indians—an Indian of real Indian India—a member of the highest and most influential caste, the caste which through every vortex and vicissitude of chequered Indian history, through all the clash and conflict of warring sects and races and religions, had striven to keep India Indian. He was of a race, too, which only a century back had shown a combination of martial and masterful qualities above all the

other races of India. He was not only a Brahmin but a Mahratta Brahmin. By his birth, his social qualities, his innate capacity, his special training, he was a true leader of men, an unmistakable influence in the land, a towering personality. He had unexampled opportunities—if he chose to avail himself of them—of appealing to the superstitions of the multitude, of stirring up racial fanaticism, of awakening hostile sentiment, of arousing antagonism to whatever was not Indian and Indian of the most pronounced and bigoted type. With his commanding ability, his passionate temperament, his forcefulness, and his ambition he was bound to chafe under British ascendancy and to strike out against British ideas.

Early in the eighties of last century, when he first entered public life, he gave indications of what was to be his line. He smote hard at his 'moderate' countrymen who advocated bringing Indian institutions into harmony with Western standards. He was no believer in harmony. He revived incendiary methods in the press and imparted a note of personal violence into newspaper polemics. He raised storms of passion and prejudice. He denounced as renegades and traitors to the cause of Hinduism all who had any truck with Western ideas and methods. He proclaimed in the schools and colleges that unless they learnt to employ force they must expect to see the downfall of their ancient institutions. He preached physical training and the use of weapons in order to develop the martial instincts of the race. With fiery eloquence he inflamed the populace against the 'foreigner' and sought to revive the memories of ancient glories. There was to be no scruple about the methods by which Hindu ascendancy was to be regained.

'Great men', he said, 'are above the common principles of morality. Such principles do not reach the pedestal of a great man. Did Shivaji commit a sin in killing Afzul Khan? The answer to this question can be found in the Mahabharata itself. The Divine Krishna teaching in the *Gita* tells us we may kill even our teachers and our kinsmen, and no blame attaches if we are not actuated by selfish desires. Shivaji did nothing from a desire to fill his own belly. It was with a praiseworthy object that he murdered Afzul Khan, for the good of others. If thieves enter our house, and we have not strength to drive them out, should we not without hesitation shut them in and burn them alive? God has conferred on



the foreigners no grant of Hindustan inscribed on imperishable brass. Shivaji<sup>1</sup> drove them forth out of the land of his birth, but he was guiltless of the sin of covetousness. Do not circumscribe your vision like frogs in a well. Rise above the Penal Code into the rarefied atmosphere of the sacred Bhagavad Gita and consider the action of great men.'

Such was the doctrine which he inculcated year after year, utilizing every suitable occasion ; with unceasing activity he worked upon the passions of the people and especially upon the raw and sensitive enthusiasm of youth. He taught that India was happier, better, and more prosperous under Hindu rule than it ever had been under foreigners ; that if the British had done some good they had also drained the wealth of the country and undermined the social and religious institutions ; and he held out the prospect that if power were restored to the Brahmins the golden age would be once more revived.

His influence was not confined to his own province. His doctrines and his example produced a profound impression in Bengal. Emotional Bengalis were carried away by his indomitable energy and his overpowering masterfulness. Their history and their character was very different from that of the Mahrattas. For centuries before the British era they had been under Mohammedan rule. They had never bid for supremacy in India. They had no martial instincts. But they were quick and supple of brain, highly sensitive, and responsive to external stimulus.

The most prominent of those Bengalis who came under the sway of Tilak's influence was Bepin Chandra Pal. He was a man of great intellectual ability and high integrity and sincerity of character. Like Tilak he had received both an Eastern and a Western education. He had also travelled considerably in both Europe and America, and he could speak and write English with copious fluency. With these qualifications he rapidly became the chief spokesman and advocate of the idea of Swaraj or self-government for India. He ridiculed the notion that India must necessarily be dependent upon Great Britain. India could and should govern herself. The increase of the number of Indians employed in the civil administration of India was in his view quite inadequate for the needs of India. A Civil Service even if entirely manned by Indians would not

<sup>1</sup> The founder of the Mahratta power.

be able to direct or dictate policy. It would simply have to carry out a policy laid down by others. 'The supplanting of European by Indian agency will not make for self-government' in India. 'Our programme is that we shall so work in the country, so combine the resources of the people, so organize the forces of the nation, so develop the instinct of freedom in the community, that by this means we shall—*shall* in the imperative—compel the submission to our will of any power that may set itself against us.'

Two methods were to be employed for the attainment of self-government. British commerce was to be killed by the boycott of imported goods, and the existing Government was to be brought to a standstill by passive resistance and the boycott of Government service. 'We can reduce every Indian in Government service to the position of a man who has fallen from the dignity of Indian citizenship.' Social honours might be refused: the chair not given or the daughter declined in marriage; and the Government service be brought into social contempt.

Nor was the self-government which Mr. Pal advocated to be self-government within the Empire.

'We refuse to be satisfied with a shadowy self-government . . . Self-government means the right of self-taxation. . . . The moment we have the right of self-taxation . . . we shall impose a heavy prohibitive protective tariff upon every inch of textile fabric from Manchester, upon every blade of knife that comes from Leeds. We shall refuse to grant admittance to a British soul into our territory. We would not allow British capital to be engaged in the development of Indian resources. We would not grant any right to British capitalists to dig up the mineral wealth of the land and carry it to their own isles.'

When such doctrines as these were being preached by men of force and eloquence like Tilak and Pal, when the native press was even more outspoken, stating that 'the Indian has come to see that independence is the panacea of all his evils: he will therefore even swim in a sea of blood to reach his goal', and when anonymous pamphlets were distributed broadcast throughout India directly inciting Indians to murder all English men and women and then clear the land of the British, there is little wonder that many an excited, ill-balanced youth was carried off his legs. Englishmen in the Civil Service were murdered. Sir Curzon Wylie was assassinated in the heart of

London. Attempts were made to derail the Viceregal train and to bomb Lord Minto; and the culminating point was reached when Lord Hardinge was actually struck by a bomb while riding through the streets of Delhi.

This fervent agitation for the independence of India was being carried on; this hatred of the British was being preached; these attempts to rid India of the British were being made in the period just immediately preceding the outbreak of the Great War. India was then more frequently visited by Germans than ever before. The Crown Prince, Grand Dukes, officers of the General Staff, diplomatists of eminence, men of science, men of business were every year coming in increasing numbers to India, and they had every opportunity for observing what was going on. There was no let upon their movements. They could read or hear all that was written or said by these advocates of Indian independence. They could see them personally if they so desired. To these Germans it must have seemed a certainty, a matter beyond all shadow of doubt, that if Great Britain were at war with Germany the Indians would eagerly seize the golden opportunity to throw off for ever the hated British yoke. When Indians were agitating for independence in time of peace, while England was disengaged and had ample time and power for dealing with disturbances, how much more likely was it that they would resort to serious open rebellion when England was engaged in defending her very life and would presumably be powerless to deal with insurrection in a distant dependency!

## CHAPTER II

### AT THE OUTBREAK

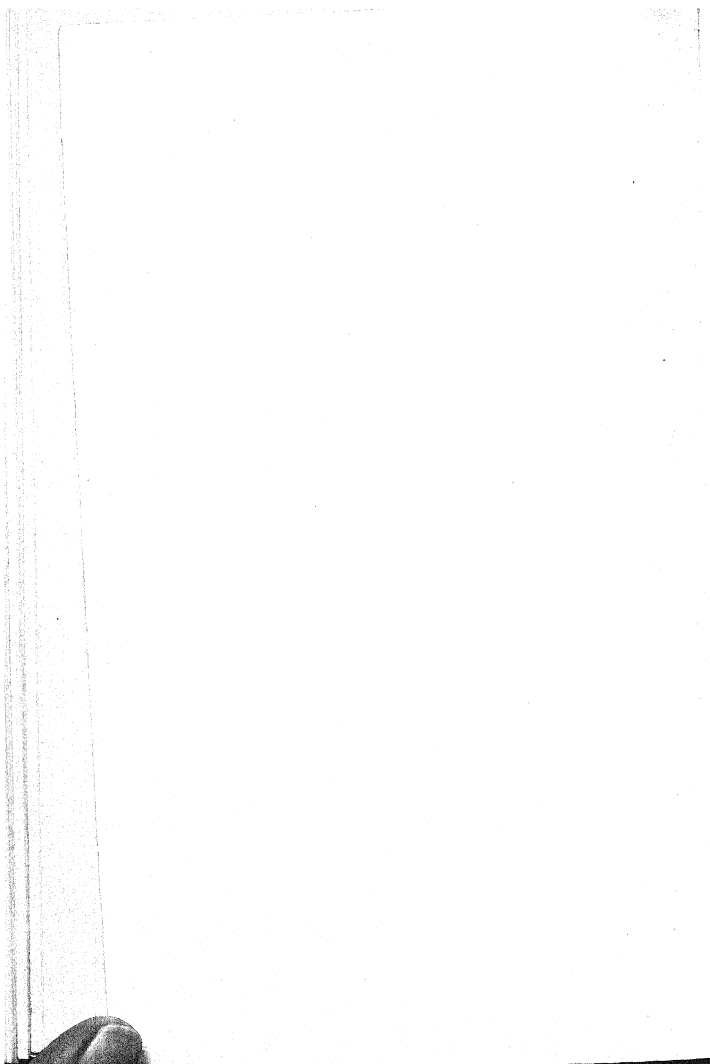
IN the event what actually happened was precisely the opposite of what seemed so certain. Instead of India jumping at the opportunity of severing the ties which bound her to Great Britain, she sprang to Great Britain's side. Countless meetings to express loyalty were held throughout India. The rulers of the Native States, numbering nearly seven hundred altogether, with one accord rallied to the defence of the Empire. Of the twenty-seven states that maintained Imperial Service Troops every one, and immediately on the outbreak, placed the services of their corps at the disposal of the Viceroy. Many chiefs and nobles—including the veteran Sir Pertab Singh over 70 years of age—offered their personal services. A number of chiefs combined to provide a hospital ship, to be named the *Loyalty*, for the use of the expeditionary force. Large sums of money were also placed by the chiefs at the disposal of Government for providing horses. Some frontier chiefs offered camels with their drivers. A Central Indian chief offered his troops, his treasury, and even his personal jewellery. All the chiefs subscribed generously to the war funds which were started.

Over the whole of India there was the same spirit. From every quarter thousands of telegrams and letters expressing loyalty and the desire to assist were sent to the Viceroy and to the Governors and Lieutenant-Governors. Every community, all manner of different associations, religious and political, and innumerable individuals, offered their resources or their personal services. Typical examples were addresses from the All-India Moslem League, the Taluqdars of Oudh, the Association of Punjab Chiefs, the Provincial Congresses of Madras and the United Provinces, the Parsee community in Bombay and the Punjab Association representing orthodox Sikhs.

The sentiments of educated Indians found expression in a resolution, passed unanimously in the Viceroy's Legislative Council, which declared that 'the members of this Council,



LORD HARDINGE OF PENS HurST



as voicing the feeling that animates the whole of the people of India, desire to give expression to their feelings of unswerving loyalty and enthusiastic devotion to their King-Emperor, and an assurance of their unflinching support to the British Government'. They desired at the same time to express the opinion that the people of India, in addition to the military assistance now being afforded by India to the Empire, would wish to share in the heavy financial burden now imposed by the war on the United Kingdom . . . and thus to demonstrate the unity of India and the Empire.

Sir Gangadhar Chitnavis, one of the elected members of the Council, in moving this resolution said that the British Empire was as one great family under one beneficent Crown. Within its doors it might have its difficulties and its differences of opinion,

'But let not the world mistake us', he said, 'should any outside danger threaten us we stand shoulder to shoulder round our mighty mother, England, and her enemies will find us arrayed in solid phalanx by her side, ready to meet any danger and render any sacrifices for the sake of the great and glorious Empire of which we are proud to call ourselves citizens. Indians of all ranks, religions, and shades of political opinion scorn and repel the suggestion that there exists any party or body or individual in their country that hopes for aught but victory for England. We know full well on what their loyal sentiment is based. It is based on gratitude for the past, on contentment in the present, on confidence for the future—a confidence deepened by our sense of loyalty and our joy at the opportunity which has been given us to prove our claim to be regarded as worthy of the noble fellowship of the Empire. . . . There is a growing desire that we should offer on this occasion all our resources in the service of our King and Emperor. That has been the prevailing sentiment in the crowded meetings convened throughout the country. We shall be untrue to ourselves and to the people we represent if here in Council we do not reiterate the sentiments that prevail outside, and make it clear to Your Excellency that we are and shall be ready to bear our share in the financial burden that will be imposed by the war. We know that our present condition is due to the peace we have enjoyed under British rule, that our very existence depends upon the continuance of that rule.'

The Mohammedan member, Raja Sir Muhammad Ali Muhammad Khan of Mahmudabad, seconded the resolution,

stating that it represented 'the very essence of Indian public opinion'. A Sikh member, Sirdar Daljit Singh, said that India cheerfully joined in the war because she believed

'in her heart of hearts that her and England's fortune are one, and that in being arrayed side by side with the British Expeditionary Force in this gigantic struggle, she is not doing anything else than fighting her own battle. Unity of interests and oneness of purpose are urging her on . . . we are all prepared shoulder to shoulder with our fellow subjects beyond the seas to uphold the honour of the British flag with all our might. All our resources, physical and material, are at the disposal of His Most Gracious Majesty, and we are ready to sacrifice our last man and our last penny in this noble cause. Every Indian, from the prince to the peasant, literate and illiterate alike, is imbued with a spirit of whole-hearted devotion to the Crown. The demonstrations of loyalty and offers of active service, which are of an unprecedented magnitude in the history of this great country, are a testimony of the appreciation of the manifold benefits derived by the people from the British Raj.' . . .

Mr. Monteath, on behalf of the mercantile community of Calcutta, said: 'Britons and Indians have joined as one in India to make her what she is. As one without the other could not have made the Indian Empire of to-day, so let India come forward and take her share in the burden of maintaining the cause of justice, honour, peace, and prosperity.' . . . Even the Bengali, Mr. Surendra Nath Banerjee, who for years had been a constant critic of Government and at one time considerably influenced by Tilak, said:

'We, the representatives of the Indian people, desire to assure Your Excellency of our unswerving loyalty to the Crown and of our firm resolve to stand by the Empire in this crisis. . . . Some of my friends referred to the tidal wave of loyalty which swept through the country from one end to the other, capturing the hearts and imagination of a great and vast people. From every section of our population, from the highest to the lowest, from the prince in his palace to the peasant in his cottage, there has emanated the most overwhelming evidence of our supreme devotion to the Empire. . . . Our loyalty has sprung from the fountains of our emotions, but it has its roots also in the reasoned judgment. We are loyal because we are patriotic; because we believe that with the stability and permanence of British rule are bound up the best prospects of Indian advancement. We believe that, under British rule, we are bound to obtain, sooner or later,



sooner rather than later, the full rights of British citizenship, and to secure for ourselves a place, I hope an honourable place, among the free States of a great and federated Empire.'

The wondrous unity thus displayed—a unity embracing all and every part of India, a unity of all classes, communities, and creeds, a unity of peoples far more varied and different than the peoples of all Europe—and the deep-set purpose to work with every other part in the defence of the whole Empire, came as a surprise even to those who knew India best and had most faith in her attachment to the Empire. We may well pause for a moment and reflect on this remarkable circumstance. We have seen how liable Indians are to be carried away by forceful suggestion. They are easily swayed for good or for bad. But they are much more easily influenced for good than for evil. And for this reason: that they are by nature admirers of the good. They were convinced from the first that in this war we were in the right—that we were fighting in a righteous cause. They admired the resolute manner in which we threw ourselves unhesitatingly into the contest. They admired, too, the way in which all the Overseas Dominions leapt to the aid of the mother country and recognized in an instant that her cause was their cause, that if she were ruined they also would be ruined, and all the ideals on which their whole young lives were being built would perish with her. Sensitive India, ideal-loving India, was profoundly influenced and affected by the spectacle. The contagion touched her also. Her heart also was moved. Her eyes also were opened. In a flash she realized all that England, all that the Empire meant. She thrilled with the joy of battling by the side of England, and by the side of Great Britain's sturdy offspring, in the great and glorious cause. She wanted to emulate them in devotion to the Empire and to the ideals on which it is built.

But even under this contagious influence India would never have risen to the occasion with such fervour and such unanimity if her innate disposition had not been in the same direction—if she had not been at heart inclined towards union with Great Britain. Indians are by nature affectionate. They are quick to detect affection and quicker to respond to it. This is one of the few general statements which can be made as to all the inhabitants of what is really more like a continent than a

country. Whether they be Bengalis from the east, Mahrattas from the west, Punjabis from the north, or Madrasis from the south, whether they be Sikhs or Gurkhas, Pathans or Rajputs, Hindus, Mohammedans, Buddhists, or Nature-worshippers, the people of India have this common characteristic : they are Indian in the affectionateness of their nature. Englishmen who serve in India experience many rubs. They exasperate and are exasperated by Indians. There are many times when the one feels he can stand the other no longer and would gladly sever all connexion. Yet when the moment arrives for an officer to leave his regiment, a civil servant his district, a lady her household, the trait in those they are about to leave which stands out conspicuous above all the rest is the warm affection of the Indians ; and as with individuals so with India as a whole in her relation to Great Britain as a whole. The heart of India has been quick to detect and quicker to respond to the affection towards her which Great Britain bears in her heart. That affection has not always been conspicuous or transparent. Oftentimes the heart of England has appeared cold and hard, and crusted over with selfishness and pride. Nevertheless India has felt sure it was there. She has seen it in our sovereigns, and she has rightly taken our sovereigns as representing the heart of Great Britain.

By the very fact that the sovereigns of Great Britain are not autocrats but constitutional monarchs they embody and objectify, interpret and make manifest what is the true will and feeling of the people. In their great public utterances and actions they give expression to what is in the heart and mind of the whole people. They express, too, not the transitory mood of the moment but the long tradition, the essential attitude of those they govern ; and this method of personifying in a monarch the general will and disposition of the people was a very happy circumstance for the relations of Great Britain and India. For Indians love to focus their feelings upon a person. Abstractions, like 'Government', mean little to them. It is a tangible flesh and blood person that they crave for, and in our recent monarchs we have been particularly fortunate. They have been especially felicitous in interpreting and expressing the deeper feelings of Great Britain towards India. Queen Victoria was peculiarly happy in this respect, and owing partly to the length of her reign, partly to her being a woman,

the Indians felt that they knew and understood her and that she knew and understood and felt for them. Her officials might be rough and rude and over-bearing, as is the way of officials, but this was not how the Great Queen would have it. *She* had their true welfare at heart; *she* was ever watching over their interests. Many other important matters she had to engage her attention; but her heart was always with her Indian people, feeling for them in times of affliction, rejoicing with them in prosperity. The depth of devotion which Indians felt towards Queen Victoria is incredible to those who do not know India. It would be thought that villages far in the interior, remote from great towns and railways and most of what keeps India outwardly in touch with England, would scarcely have heard of her or if they had heard would have taken little interest in her. Yet on her death there was weeping and lamentation in the remotest villages, and the sorrow of these simple villagers and their affection for her was absolutely genuine. So also, at the opposite end of the scale of Indian life, was the devotion of the chiefs. As one ruler can sympathize with another so the chiefs knew that Queen Victoria felt for them. In her they knew they had a friend—one who would maintain their rights and uphold their dignity. Those of them who had visited England were deeply impressed by the wonderful blending of graciousness and dignity with which she received them, and by that underlying strain of warm and human sympathy which ran through all her actions. The proudest chief in India was proud to be connected with such a sovereign, and the roughest has spoken of her as divine.

The root attitude of Great Britain to India has never been that of conqueror to conquered. England never did conquer India. What she did was to establish order where she found chaos—and establish order often at the request of, and always with the aid of, Indians themselves. The English went there—more than three hundred years ago, in the time of Queen Elizabeth—for trade and nothing else. The East India Company was a trading company. It wanted to do business with the people of India, not to conquer and rule them. It wanted to purchase the spices and the cotton and muslins of India with the woollen goods and manufactures of England. But it had to carry on its trade in the teeth of keen rivalry from the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the French, and in the face of

increasing disorder among the 'country powers'. It had either to abandon its purpose, withdraw from the scene, and leave its rivals to establish order and carry on the trade, or else it had to step in itself. The reiterated instructions to agent after agent, and governor after governor, to stick to business and avoid being entangled in the intricate politics of India are proof enough that the Company hated the idea of interference, and would have much preferred to pursue its own very lucrative business. It had no turn nor taste for politics, and the maintenance of armed forces for the establishment of order meant heavy expense and diminished profits. The solid common sense of practical City business men was dead against embarking on a course of political interference in the affairs of India—against raising armies, siding with one chief, opposing another, and administering densely populated districts. It saw no end to the complications in which the company might be involved, and it saw all its future profits being swallowed up in the expenses of defence and administration. But this same common sense saw also that there was no alternative between this military, political, and administrative interference and the utter abandonment of their trade with India. The country powers were wholly incapable of preserving order. Even in the time of the great Akbar, when they first went there, the English traders could not rely on that protection from attack which the Company had a right to expect. They were liable to attack by pirates at sea, by marauders on land, and by the Portuguese on both land and sea; and Akbar's rule, firm in the centre of India though it was, was weak at the circumference, while on the sea it simply did not exist. Akbar had no navy. After Akbar's time matters grew steadily worse till, at the time when the Moghul Empire finally broke up, India was nothing but a seething cauldron of petty states at incessant war with one another. There was no coherence and no order. The British Company was driven by the hard force of circumstances into interference. It simply had to go in and bring about some kind of order. First of all in its own settlements it had to set up an armed force for the maintenance of order. Then it had to use this force—augmented perhaps—for the establishment of order in the country immediately around its settlements. Neighbouring chiefs would apply for the service of the Company's forces to

repel attacks on their own territory and the Company would be drawn into an alliance. Irresistibly it came about, under the pressure of two dominating factors, firstly the need for establishing order, and secondly the presence of a rival who would undertake the task and destroy all trade between India and England if the Company refused to take it up, that British influence, authority, and ascendancy increased—and increased till the British became the dominant power in India.

There was no sudden conquest of India—there was no real conquest at all. All came about gradually and inevitably in the course of between two and three centuries, and the point especially to mark is that throughout the long process the British have been the cohesive element which, insinuating itself into the life of India, at last succeeded in holding India together and making of it a stable fabric—they have been a stabilizing element introduced into the body politic rather than an overpowering weight which has suddenly crashed down on a weaker people and crushed them to pieces beneath it. From the first the British employed Indians in the maintenance of order. They organized defence corps, drilled and armed natives for the defence of settlements. Later when they formed armies the proportion of Europeans to Indians was very small. To this day there are two Indian soldiers in India to every British soldier, and the number of British soldiers in proportion to the whole population is as one to four thousand. Moreover, the British always tried to preserve friendship with the chiefs of India. It was no part of their policy to turn out the chiefs. The old trading company was only too thankful if it could find on its borders some good strong reliable chieftainship which would serve as a bulwark and save the Company from the necessity of any further territorial expansion. It was only when the chiefs were actively hostile, or when they were so incapable of preserving order in their own territory as to become a source of danger to the Company's territories, that the Company took up arms against a chief. The existence at the present day of nearly seven hundred chiefs of varying degrees of importance, from the Nizam of Hyderabad ruling over eleven millions of inhabitants to hill chieftains whose subjects do not number more than a few hundreds, is testimony to the tendency of British policy. The Punjab is a specially good example. In the Punjab are many Sikh

chiefs like the Maharajas of Patiala and Kapurthala who always maintained friendly relations with the British Government. In the most troublous times they never swerved in their friendship and they remain to this day. As long as Ranjit Singh ruled over the northern part of the Punjab he also remained staunch in his friendship, and the British respected it and were thankful to have him there as a powerful friend. But on his death there was no stability but constant disorder. First one then another seized the throne. The powerful Sikh forces were led across the British border against the British and war resulted. The Sikhs were defeated and an effort was made to set up a stable government; but again the British were attacked, and to prevent further disorder it became necessary to bring that portion of the Punjab under direct British rule.

As in the Punjab so in India as a whole, a part, about a third, still remains under its own rulers and part is directly administered by the British, and here comes in the second point of importance to remark. The British in that portion which they directly rule do not aim at keeping the people down by sheer force. They have deliberately set themselves to train the people to take an increasing share in the government of their own country. The Chinese after they had conquered Turkistan simply left the people alone. All over the country they built great walled cities alongside the native cities, and in these cities they themselves lived. They did a little—though not much—to improve communications so that their high officials might travel about the more conveniently; and they kept the peace. They also used such native functionaries as were already in existence for the detailed administration of the country. But they did not consider it any part of their duty to set to work deliberately to educate and train up the people for the government of their country or to improve their condition of life and raise them morally as well as materially. This the British in India did. They did consider it their duty to elevate the condition of the people. They had been reluctant to interfere in Indian affairs. But being compelled by circumstances to establish an influence and exercise predominant authority there, they determined that they must use their influence and authority to better the lot of the Indian people. The British would not be content with the role of policemen

or even of judges. They meant to be teachers and educators as well. As long ago as 1833 the British Parliament laid down that Indians were to be trained and fitted for the government of their own country, and when fitted were to be so employed. Thirty years later Indians were associated with the Viceroy's Executive Council to form a Legislative Council. The numbers were at various periods increased, and an increasing proportion of them were elected by Indians themselves instead of being nominated by the Viceroy. Their powers were also increased. More and more Indians were employed in the administration of the country and placed in higher and higher positions, till they occupied seats on the benches of the High Court and in the Viceroy's Executive Council itself, as well as on the Council of the Secretary of State for India in London. In the sphere of local self-government their powers were similarly increased : they were allowed to elect their own representatives on Municipal Boards and District Councils. The whole tendency of British rule for a century past has been to fit Indians to rule themselves and to employ them for their own governance as soon as they were fit. The British may not have employed the best methods and may have been too sluggish. The execution of their purpose may have been faulty and may have been dilatory. But the will and intention were there. They meant not only to keep order but to fit the people for self-government. They worked not to curb freedom but to make freedom possible.

So not only was order maintained, justice evenly dispensed, roads and railways built, material resources developed, trade fostered, but the people were better educated and associated more and more with the British in the Government of India. The bulk of the people were still miserably poor, but they were secure on their land or in their business and their condition was steadily improving. We can understand, then, why it was that when the call came to them in August 1914 they were predisposed to respond to it. They were quite unaware of the depth of their feeling. As so often happens in crises of life, they acted with a spontaneity and decision which was surprising even to themselves. They realized that the British connexion was a great deal more to them than they had ever imagined. The chiefs, the gentry, responsible public men, as well as the great mass of the cultivators of the soil—all those

who had a stake in the country and would fall if their country fell—realized of a sudden what Great Britain was to them—realized that if Great Britain fell India would fall too and they with it. This was not reasoned out. In those tense tremendous moments it was instinctively felt, and felt with deep conviction. Hence the wonderful enthusiasm with which India instantly joined with Great Britain in the war.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Chapters II and III have been largely based upon *India's Contribution to the Great War*, published by authority of the Government of India, 1923.



## CHAPTER III

### INDIA'S EFFORT

WHEN India was glowing with this fervent and most generous enthusiasm it might have seemed on the face of it that her entry into the war would have a decisive effect. Germany and her Austrian ally together had but half the population India could number. India had also great natural resources. She can produce what Germany and Austria produce—wheat, barley, cattle, sheep; and in addition, owing to her tropical climate, she can produce what Germany and her ally so much needed but which they could not by any possibility produce, namely, cotton, rubber, and jute, and in addition rice, tea and coffee, coco-nuts, and many oil-seeds. India possesses also vast quantities of coal and iron and water-power of immense extent.

This great advantage India had in comparison with our enemies, overwhelming superiority both in numbers and in natural resources. But India labours under many counter-acting disadvantages. The Indian peoples, though numerous, have not the physical or mental energy of the Central Europeans and they lack too the initiative and resource as well as the organizing capacity. The Indian cultivator with all his advantages does not get from Indian soil anything like what Germans by their intelligence, industry, and co-operative and organizing capacity get from German soil. The Indians through long ages have failed to develop the mineral resources of their country, and we British, though we have done something, have been sadly supine in stimulating the Indians to increased and wiser efforts in these directions. The Indian people are consequently a poor people—extremely poor. Individually they had neither the physique and stamina nor the intellectual force of the foes to whom they were now opposed, and collectively they were more deficient still, for they had no native capacity for collective action.

A further drawback under which they suffered was their system of caste. Caste has many advantages. It keeps the members of a particular community together as a community,

and preserves them from being swept away, lost, and merged in a general *mêlée*. During the many wars and invasions of India the different caste communities have to a great extent preserved themselves intact. But in the rigidity to which caste has developed in India, where the member of one caste cannot eat with the member of another, and the member of a high caste looks upon the member of a low caste as a pollution, caste becomes a terrible impediment in the way of instantaneous and whole-hearted unity of action of the whole body politic. When a high-caste soldier will not to save his life take a cup of water from a low-caste person there can never be that intense intimacy of union between all individuals which success in war demands.

In leadership also Indians were lacking. Here again we British may possibly have been to blame in so far that we have done little to foster, encourage, and bring out whatever capacity for leadership the Indians might possess. But India is not naturally productive of leadership. The people are inherently and by tradition disposed to look to authority. They will obey commands with docility, but few will care to come forward and lead. The natural propensity of Indians is to place themselves under those who will lead rather than to take up the burden and responsibilities of leadership themselves. This propensity has unconsciously and undesignedly been rather encouraged than discouraged by the British. India has never furnished any great and first-rate military leaders whose names ring out in the annals of the world. But in the wars following on the break-up of the Moghul Empire among the Mahrattas, Sikhs, Pindaris, and others there sprang up many leaders who put our best troops on their mettle. Hyder Ali is a conspicuous example. In the Mutiny Tantia Tope showed considerable military capacity. Among the commanders of regiments in the Sikh wars, especially, were Indians who evoked great admiration from British officers who fought against them and who, moreover, subsequently had these very men serving under them.

This military capacity, such as it was, the tendency of British rule has been to sap into and emasculate. When the necessity for a frontier expedition has arisen the Government of India have naturally wanted to get it through as rapidly and also as economically as possible, and the way to do this has been

to employ the most efficient troops they have at their disposal. A general appointed to the command of an expedition will also naturally ask for the best troops and the best officers, and both Government and general have believed that those troops are the best and most efficient and will carry the expedition through to a successful conclusion most rapidly who are trained in peace and led in war by British officers. They have believed that troops who during peace have been trained by Indians and who in war would be led by Indians would be less efficient and less reliable. They would require just the same amount of transport and supplies—those twin basic necessities of all campaigns—but would do the work less expeditiously and consequently at greater cost and less effectively. Practical experience of Indian warfare also showed that Indian regiments which had heavy casualties among their British officers became unsteady and unreliable. The natural tendency arising from all these considerations was to emphasize the role of the British officer in military training, organization, administration and leadership, and to diminish the importance of the Indian, so that at the outbreak of the war there were no Indians in Indian regiments who were the equals of British 2nd Lieutenants; all Indians, however long and however distinguished their service, had to take their orders from a British 2nd Lieutenant, even though he had no war service whatever and his peace service might not have extended beyond a year. Nor were there Indians in high positions in the military administration as there were in the civil administration. This circumstance, however necessary and natural it may have been, must have had, and did have, a devitalizing effect on Indian military spirit, and serves in some degree to account for the fact that India with all her hundreds of millions of men was able to put forth but a meagre military effort in comparison with that of her foes.

Nor should we forget that the armed forces in India were not organized or in any case regarded as a potential reserve to the armed forces of the Empire. 'The primary functions of the pre-war Army in India were twofold, namely, the maintenance of order within and on the borders of British India, and secondly, the provision of a field army capable, should the necessity arise, of undertaking a campaign beyond the border' for the purpose of defence against external aggression. 'The

Army in India was in no sense maintained for meeting external obligations of an imperial character', according to the Commander-in-Chief in India in his final dispatch on the part taken by India in the prosecution of the war. There had indeed been occasions, such as the dispatch of Indian troops to Malta in 1878,<sup>1</sup> upon which small contingents from India had been employed in support of Imperial interests in other parts of the world. But it had never been the policy of the Government to maintain troops in India in excess of those actually required for the protection of her own interests. There was the organization for providing a force for the defence of India itself; but there was not the organization for providing a great force for expeditions overseas. The committee which had reported on the Army in India in 1912 had indeed expressed the opinion that 'the Army in India should be so organized and equipped as to be capable of affording ready overseas co-operation, when the situation in India allows of it, in such direction as H.M. Government may determine'. But while the idea had thus been mooted and to a certain extent officially recognized, financial difficulties had prevented steps being taken to give effect to the proposal.

For these several reasons it was difficult to utilize and bring into practical effect the enthusiasm which India showed on the outbreak of the war, and actually to put in the field a force at all commensurate either in numbers or in quality with her vast population. India might have thrice the numbers of the Germanic Powers, but her military effort could not possibly be anything like in proportion to her numbers or her enthusiasm.

If men's enthusiasm is not utilized while it is still at white heat it is apt to die down and go out. There is nothing so disheartening as being ready and willing to make any and every sacrifice one could possibly be called upon to make and yet to find no scope or opportunity for any useful effort. In England there was in those early days naturally even more enthusiasm for the war than there was in India. Men in millions were burning to join in the fight. But after the first two or three months a cold chill crept over the nation, and this came from two causes. Firstly, dead secrecy as to the movement of troops and as to the fighting taking place was

<sup>1</sup> See vol. i, pp. 53-4. In that volume is given a record of the overseas services of the Indian Army prior to 1914.

imposed ; so that the nation became enveloped in darkness. No regiment, no general, no officer, no man could be given a send-off because no one knew when or where they were going. Nor did any one know what was happening on sea or land. Even when reports of fighting came it was suspected that it was only the best and not the worst that was published. All this was deadly damping to any enthusiasm. The second cause of the chilling of enthusiasm was that there was not the machinery at hand for dealing with an immense rush of men to the colours. They could not be housed, or clothed, or armed straight away on the spot. The men were wanted right enough but wanted gradually, and as it became possible to make use of them. Those who volunteered were not therefore received with much sign of warmth. They were—albeit unavoidably—kept hanging about inadequately housed, insufficiently clothed, and for a long time without any proper arms at all. From this cause also enthusiasm was chilled. It was much the same in India. The Government of India is at all times a chilly government to serve. It envelops itself in mystery and dwells on heights aloof from poor struggling humanity in the dull plains below. The habitual mystery was still further deepened by war. When England could be allowed to know so little, India could obviously not be allowed to know more. If India could have been allowed to see the war as spectators see a football match she would no doubt have felt the thrill and excitement, and the first enthusiasm would have continued unabated and would even have been augmented. But when she saw and heard even less than we in England, as being nearer to the scene, saw and heard, enthusiasm naturally waned.

Great therefore though the initial enthusiasm was, and heartily as the Indians desired to join the rest of the Empire in the war against Germany and to co-operate with the other Imperial forces, when it came to translating this keen desire into effective action many drawbacks and deficiencies revealed themselves.

At the outbreak of war the Army in India amounted to some 77,000 British and 159,000 Indians. Out of this force a field army had been organized nominally consisting of 9 divisions and 8 cavalry brigades ; but in reality only 7 divisions and 5 cavalry brigades were ready for service, and these, though fairly adequately equipped for frontier warfare, were

not provided with much of the equipment essential in a campaign against a modern army. The field army had no motor transport, was ill supplied with telephone equipment, and was short of other important requisites. Moreover, the Indian division at full strength was only equal to about two-thirds of a British division, it had only one brigade of field artillery as against four, it had no field howitzers or heavy guns, its infantry battalions had a war establishment only three-quarters of that of the battalions of a British division, and if it had a pioneer battalion, which British divisions at the outset of the war did not possess, two mountain batteries armed with 10-pounders, and a regiment of divisional cavalry in place of one squadron, these were little compensation for its weakness in artillery.<sup>1</sup> It was a further weakness that the Indian Army was ill provided with reserves, in both quantity and quality; the Indian reservist as a rule proved too old for service and very inefficient, and the Indian Army Reserve of Officers only mustered 40. The system of raising and organizing regiments did not make it easy to maintain the strength or efficiency of the units in the field. Of 125 infantry regiments only 11 had a second battalion, and though the remainder were linked in groups of three, officers and men of one unit in the group being liable to be transferred to the others, any extensive drain on the 'linked' battalions meant reducing the efficiency of the others to keep one efficient. When a battalion had to find a whole double company as a draft for a 'link' on active service it was rendered incapable of taking the field itself for months to come. The system proved quite unsuited for the heavy demands of the situation, and the evil was aggravated by the low peace establishment of Indian units.

But with all these defects the Indian Army contained many regiments with high traditions and standards, recruited from martial races with fine fighting records, led by officers of capacity and with experience of active service, and its existence enabled India to stand out at the beginning of the war as the one portion of the Empire outside the United Kingdom in which there was a trained and highly disciplined army of Regular soldiers ready at once to take the field. 'Bis dat qui

<sup>1</sup> The Lahore and Meerut Divisions were only provided with a more or less adequate force of field artillery by adding to each two 18-pounder brigades allotted to other formations, and even so they had no howitzers and no 60-pounders.

cito dat' and the value of India's contribution to the defence of the Empire lay conspicuously in the promptitude with which it was rendered at one of the most critical moments of the whole war. The call on India was immediate and urgent, and the Indian Army was ready to answer it.

The Home Government wanted two infantry divisions and one cavalry brigade to be sent from India for garrison duty in Egypt and the Sudan. It was an unfortunate moment for mobilization and the dispatch of forces overseas, as a large proportion of the British troops were located in summer quarters in the hills, in many cases at long distances from the railway; the Indian troops were largely on leave; a considerable number of British officers were at home on furlough, and of these 530 were detained on the outbreak of war for employment under the War Office.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the incidence of the monsoon season was a severe handicap to Indian troops, the bulk of whom had never before crossed the ocean. In spite of these drawbacks the 3rd (Lahore) and 7th (Meerut) Divisions and the 9th (Secunderabad) Cavalry Brigade were mobilized and made ready for dispatch overseas.<sup>2</sup> But Lord Hardinge and the Government of India urged that the relegation of their troops to garrison duty would be keenly felt by the men themselves, and that it was most desirable, from every point of view, that India should be represented on the European front. The destination of the contingent was accordingly changed to Marseilles. At the same time a request was received for a complete cavalry division, and subsequently for a second cavalry division, instead of the one cavalry brigade originally asked for; these were at once placed under orders, and the first convoy transporting the contingent to France sailed from Bombay on the 25th of August, i. e. within three weeks of the declaration of war. The bulk of the force had disembarked at Marseilles before the end of September, and on the 22nd of October the 57th (Wilde's) Rifles came into the fighting line in Flanders. The total strength of the original contingent dispatched to France amounted approximately to 16,000 British and 28,500 Indian ranks.

<sup>1</sup> These officers were largely employed in raising and training units of the 'New Armies' many of which owed no small debt to their help, so that here also India contributed notably to the war effort of the Empire.

<sup>2</sup> The 6th (Poona) Division referred to below was also destined originally for Egypt or Europe.

A request was also received within the first few days of the war for the preparation of a mixed force including six battalions to deal with German East Africa, and for three additional battalions for the protection of Zanzibar and the Mombasa-Nairobi railway, the operation of the latter being controlled by the Colonial Office. The dispatch of the former was somewhat delayed by the shortage of shipping and the difficulty of providing naval escort, as the German cruisers *Emden* and *Königsberg* were at large and the former had even appeared off Madras. But the force eventually arrived off Mombasa on the 31st of October, and sailed for Tanga next day. One of the three battalions for British East Africa, the 29th Punjabis, sailed on the 19th of August, and was in action at Tsavo on the 6th of September. With the arrival of the remaining two battalions the two forces were amalgamated under one command. The strength of these two contingents, which contained a large proportion of Imperial Service Troops, that is troops of the Indian States trained for imperial service and placed at the disposal of Government by their respective chiefs,<sup>1</sup> amounted approximately to 1,500 British and 10,250 Indian ranks.

In the meantime the threatening attitude of Turkey had made it necessary to take steps for the protection of the very important Abadan oil pipe-line in south-west Persia on the borders of Mesopotamia, and it was decided to dispatch a brigade of the 6th (Poona) Division (which had been mobilized in anticipation of further demands) to demonstrate at the head of the Persian Gulf, without, however, taking hostile action. This brigade embarked on the 16th of October and arrived at Bahrein—a British island in the Persian Gulf—on the 23rd. With the declaration of war against Turkey a week later, the brigade was ordered to take Fao, and a second brigade was placed under orders to support it. By the end of November the whole of the 6th Division had reached Mesopotamia. The strength of this advanced guard of the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force amounted approximately to 4,500 British and 12,000 Indian ranks.

The Government of India were further requested in the course of October to dispatch to Egypt a force of six infantry

<sup>1</sup> For the beginning of Imperial Service Troops see vol. i, pp. 113-17. The Imperial Service Troops which served in East Africa included a contingent from Kashmir, who did very well in the unsuccessful attack on Tanga.



brigades (including one composed of Imperial Service Troops) and one Imperial Service Cavalry Brigade. These troops, numbering approximately 1,500 British and 27,250 Indian ranks, disembarked in Egypt during November and December. A small Indian contingent, a half battalion of the 36th Sikhs then doing garrison duty in North China, also co-operated with the Japanese in the attack on the German naval base at Tsing-tao in North China.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the organized forces dispatched to France, East Africa, Mesopotamia, and Egypt, 32 British infantry battalions and 20 batteries of artillery aggregating 35,000 British ranks were sent independently to England to facilitate the expansion of the Army at home,<sup>2</sup> and were gradually replaced by 35 Territorial battalions and 29 Territorial field batteries. The small residue of the pre-war British Regular garrison was concentrated in formations on the North-West Frontier, while the Territorial units, who had at that time much to learn as regards warfare under the novel conditions of a country like India, underwent a course of intensive training in the interior of India.

Thus, by the close of 1914, India was maintaining four overseas forces amounting in the aggregate to over 100,000 men of all ranks, and had in addition exchanged 35,500 of the best British Regular troops for an equivalent number of semi-trained Territorials with inferior armament and equipment. For a country with a population of 315,000,000 to send only 100,000 at the end of five months, and to provide practically

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 433.

<sup>2</sup> These battalions and batteries formed the greater part of the 27th and 28th Divisions, which proceeded to France in December 1914 and January 1915 respectively, and of the 29th Division which distinguished itself so greatly at Gallipoli. The first four battalions to arrive from India were allotted to the 8th Division, which reached France early in November 1914. The importance of the arrival of these reinforcements can hardly be exaggerated.

This left the Regular element in the British garrison of India reduced to three regiments of cavalry (two of which, the 7th and 14th Hussars, went to Mesopotamia later), about a dozen batteries of R.F.A. with a few other artillery units, and nine battalions of infantry, of which the 2nd Royal West Kent was part of the 12th Indian Brigade, the first reinforcement sent to Mesopotamia, while the other battalions were in the divisions on the frontier. The Territorials who replaced the troops withdrawn consisted of the Wessex and Home Counties Divisions, who left England in the middle and at the end of October respectively, together with the infantry of the Second Line Wessex Division, new formations raised since the beginning of the war and originally intended as Reserve or Home Service units; these followed in December.

none of the overseas transport or naval escort, may not seem a very great achievement. But the difficulties and drawbacks already mentioned must be considered, and if India with all its numbers could supply only this small quota this must be remembered, that what there were of Indian troops came into action in the very nick of time—at a time when every single man trained for warfare was of inestimable value. Throughout other parts of the Empire thousands and millions of men were straining to be in the fighting line, but though the fate of the world was in the balance they could not be used for they were not trained. India could send only 100,000 men but she could send them when they were most wanted. It was in the critical days of the end of October and of early November that the Indian Corps took over the right of the line in France, setting free British troops to relieve exhausted battalions on the Ypres front and to beat off the crowning effort of the Prussian Guard on November 11th; and that India could send even this number was a great deal more than had ever before been expected, for it could not be done without risk. The frontier is always unsteady, and the entry of Turkey into the war might well occasion concern in the Mohammedan State of Afghanistan, among the fanatical and easily roused frontier tribes, and even among Mohammedans in India itself. The Germans, too, might be expected to—and actually did—attempt to stir up the people of India against the British. Against internal rising and external aggression the Government of India had necessarily to be on their guard; and with the stock of rifles reduced to a very low figure by demands from the field and by the transfer to the War Office of a large number which were under manufacture in England, and with the number of mobile guns reduced from 474 to 270, the risk that the Government took was considerable. At one critical moment, indeed, when the Regular British units had left and before the Territorial battalions had arrived, there were under 30,000 British troops in India. When these risks are considered, what India gave in the early days of the war was no mean contribution.

In 1915 the growing importance of the campaign in Mesopotamia involved a steadily increasing demand for men and material at a time when the armed forces of India had been reduced to a dangerously low level. From small beginnings

the campaign in Mesopotamia assumed a character of the greatest importance to India, since its reaction was felt all over Persia, and, indeed, throughout the East. Early in the year urgent representations from His Majesty's Government led to the increase of the force in Mesopotamia from one division to the strength of two divisions and one cavalry brigade. One infantry brigade<sup>1</sup> was obtained from Egypt, but the remainder of these additional troops were provided from India, and reached Basra by the end of March. Late in the autumn two more brigades were sent from India, and towards the close of the year the leading units of the Indian Army Corps from France began to arrive in the country, its release from France being made possible by the rapid expansion of the British Army. The provision of these additional formations from the depleted garrisons of India was a matter of grave concern, and was only made possible by the promise of His Majesty's Government to send a number of British Garrison Battalions from home for second-line duty in India. By the close of the year the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force had grown from the strength of a single division to over 50,000 fighting men.

It was not only from Mesopotamia that increased demands upon India came during 1915.<sup>2</sup> In addition to Mesopotamia contingents from India were engaged in France and Belgium (where the two cavalry divisions were still retained after the infantry had left), in Egypt, in Gallipoli,<sup>3</sup> in South and East Persia, in East Africa, in the Cameroons, in the Aden hinterland, in Somaliland, and on the North-West and North-East Frontiers of India, besides garrisons at several colonial stations.

The progress of events in German East Africa soon made it apparent that the Expeditionary Force in that quarter would continue to draw largely upon India for men and material. Some of the units which had suffered severely in the early stages of the campaign were withdrawn to India and replaced by fresh units, and four additional battalions were dispatched during the year. But the chief burden imposed by the East

<sup>1</sup> The 30th Brigade under Major-General Sir C. Melliss, V.C.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 246, below.

<sup>3</sup> The troops at Gallipoli came from those already in Egypt and their employment only involved an additional drain on India in as much as large drafts were required to fill the gaps made by the heavy losses. The force in Egypt also provided several reliefs for shattered battalions serving in France, five of which were withdrawn during the summer and replaced by fresh units.

African campaign at this period, and, indeed, throughout the war, was the replacement of wastage rather than the provision of complete units ; in certain cases demands were received for draft reinforcements amounting to over 50 per cent. of establishment before the unit had been three months in the country.

It was this problem of finding sufficient drafts to keep the units in the field up to strength which was the main strain on the resources of India in 1915. It was not only from East Africa but from all the theatres of war that heavy and incessant demands were received. The insufficiency of the Reserve had soon been apparent, not only in numbers but in quality : many of the reinforcements sent to France at the end of 1914 proved to be physically quite unfit for the strain of trench warfare ; they fell so far below the standards of training and discipline of the original force as to reduce the efficiency of the battalions to which they were posted. The problem of finding officers was even more acute. An Indian unit which had no longer at its head the British officers by whom it had been trained and taught, which had in their place officers who did not know the men they had to command, or speak their language, was very much below the value of the original units who had landed at Marseilles in October.<sup>1</sup> Even when the drafts took the shape of whole companies of 'linked' battalions, trained soldiers of good physique, there was some loss of cohesion, and the battalion from which they came was seriously depleted. Very early in the war, before the end of 1914, orders were issued for raising extra companies and double companies in various battalions serving in India in order to fill the gaps already caused by the demands for drafts and to provide for future requirements, and in the course of 1915 this plan was adopted on an extended scale. However, even this barely sufficed to keep pace with the needs of the battalions in the field, and nothing in the way of any expansion of the Indian Army was attempted. In March 1915 the formation of a

<sup>1</sup> The state to which some battalions were reduced may be illustrated by the composition of the 9th Bhopals when they were transferred to Egypt in June 1915 : they had with them 11 Indian officers and 492 rank and file belonging to no less than ten other units, only a small proportion of whom came from their own 'linked' battalions. The 15th Sikhs were in as bad case or worse. This lack of homogeneity inevitably involved a loss of efficiency and the reputation of some of the finest regiments in the Indian Army had come to depend on a scratch collection of men from many units with which they had no connexion.

provisional second battalion for the 67th Punjabis was sanctioned, but this precedent was not followed up for some time ; up to the end of 1916 only eight such new battalions had been raised.

Throughout the year the situation on the North-West Frontier of India was somewhat unsettled as the result of hostile activities among the tribesmen, and operations became necessary in Baluchistan, the Tochi valley, the Mohmand border, Swat, Buner, and the Black Mountain, on a scale which involved the employment of the whole of the 1st (Peshawar) and part of the 2nd (Rawal Pindi) Divisions.

A coterie of disaffected Indians, acting as hostile agents and directing their operations from overseas, endeavoured—though with small success—to sow disaffection among the troops and to create internal disorder. A disquieting feature was a wave of unrest in the Punjab, which was, however, firmly suppressed and has in no way tarnished the record of the province as the most productive recruiting area in India. Repeated efforts were made under German guidance to ship arms to India via Batavia and Siam. The year was thus one of anxiety both within and on the borders of India, and regard for the internal security of India made it still more difficult to meet the demands upon the country from outside, though the steady improvement of the Territorial contingent from home and the addition to the Army in India of six Nepalese battalions—increased nine months later to ten—which the Nepal Government generously placed at the disposal of the Government of India for the period of the war were reassuring elements in the situation.

The demands for men and material from all these different quarters constantly threatened to outpace the ability of India to meet them, and the complexity of the problem which presented itself can be readily realized from the mere enumeration of the variety of theatres in which Indian troops were engaged during the year. It is important, again, to emphasize that whereas the pre-war policy of His Majesty's Government required of India that she should be prepared merely for a hill campaign beyond her frontiers, the general policy of the Empire on the outbreak of war dictated a concentration of effort towards the strengthening of our position in Europe and the North Sea. The energies of India had therefore been directed

towards this common object, and the decision of His Majesty's Government to develop the campaign in Mesopotamia far beyond the limits originally assigned to it presented a problem of great difficulty and involved a readjustment of the financial, commercial, and manufacturing resources of India. It must be remembered also that at this period the output of the United Kingdom was required almost exclusively to meet the demands of the British forces in Europe, and the various Indian contingents already enumerated were therefore dependent chiefly on India as their base of supply. The wide variety of climatic and other conditions under which these contingents were serving was in itself a source of extreme difficulty and taxed the resources of India to the utmost.

In 1916 the Mesopotamian campaign again made the chief demand upon India. In addition to the 3rd (Lahore) and the 7th (Meerut) Divisions which reached Basra early in the year, a reinforcement of five additional battalions was sent from India and three infantry brigades were mobilized to proceed if and when it should be found possible to replace them. On the other hand the whole burden of Mesopotamia was not thrown on India, for the 13th British Division in Egypt was ordered to proceed to Mesopotamia. When the disaster at Kut took place immediate steps had to be taken to reconstitute the fourteen Indian battalions which had been lost.<sup>1</sup> Steps were also taken to relieve with fresh troops from India some of the units which had been continuously on service since the beginning of the war and which had suffered severely in the relief operations. Three additional battalions were also sent from India for garrison duty on the lines of communication. On the other hand on the evacuation of Gallipoli and the transfer to Egypt of the whole Mediterranean Expeditionary Force the burden of defending Egypt was almost entirely removed from the shoulders of the Indian Army. Of the Indian units serving in Egypt some had been transferred to the Lahore and Meerut Divisions on their passage through the Canal, allowing tired battalions from France like the 39th Garhwalis to return to India; several more came back to India early in 1916, three went to East Africa, others to Aden and the Persian Gulf, leaving only a weak brigade of Indian Regulars in Egypt along with the Imperial Service Troops.

<sup>1</sup> Some were reconstituted in Mesopotamia itself, others at their depots in India.

At the request of the Persian Government a mission was sent to South Persia to restore and maintain order, and a force known as the South Persia Rifles was created, locally raised, but largely officered from India. Moreover, in conjunction with the Russians a small force was maintained in East Persia to frustrate the activities of hostile agents in the direction of Afghanistan and India.

The situation on the North-West Frontier gave less anxiety than in the previous year. A local disturbance in Baluchistan was easily suppressed. A strict blockade against the Mohmand tribes had to be instituted, but elsewhere the frontier remained quiet.

The arrival of sixteen Garrison Battalions from England set free sufficient Territorial and Indian battalions to add a much-needed division to the field army and greatly facilitated the task of reinforcing British units overseas.

#### 1917

During 1917 the series of operations which culminated in the capture of Baghdad made the chief demand upon Indian resources. General Maude's brilliant successes were not achieved without considerable casualties and big drafts were required. However, the expansion of the Indian Army which General Sir Charles Monro had set on foot on taking over command in India was now bearing fruit,<sup>1</sup> and not only were ample drafts forthcoming but a large number of additional battalions and an extra cavalry regiment could be dispatched to Mesopotamia. It even proved possible in the autumn to organize one new division in Mesopotamia and another in India, and these, the 17th and 18th Indian Divisions, set free for transfer to Palestine to reinforce General Allenby the Lahore and Meerut Divisions who moved thither early in 1918. An additional cavalry brigade was also provided together with several units for service on the lines of communication.

An active defence had to be maintained at Aden during the year. In South and East Persia several minor operations were undertaken against raiders, robber bands, and gun-runners, while on the North-West Frontier of India operations lasting from March to August had to be undertaken against the Mahsuds in Waziristan. It was something therefore to set

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix to this Chapter.

off against all these drains on India's resources that, with the expulsion of von Lettow Vorbeck from German East Africa,<sup>1</sup> the end was in sight for the Indian units hitherto serving in that country.

## 1918

This year was the climax of the war, and in 1918 the severest demand was made upon India. The great German offensive strained the whole Empire to the utmost, and on April 2nd the Prime Minister telegraphed to the Viceroy calling upon the Government and people of India to redouble their efforts. 'The attempt of the enemy in the West', he said, 'is being checked, but if we are to prevent the menace spreading to the East and gradually engulfing the world, every lover of freedom and law must play his part.' 'India must equip itself on an even greater scale than at present', he added, 'to be the bulwark which will save Asia from the tide of oppression and disorder which it is the object of the enemy to achieve.'

It involved a further and larger demand for men than had hitherto been contemplated. Not only did it become necessary to increase the armies in India and overseas, but the extreme urgency of concentrating British man-power on the Western Front in France threw upon India the additional obligation of replacing the British soldier wherever he could be spared.

Palestine now became what Mesopotamia had hitherto been, the chief theatre in which Indian troops were employed and the main drain on India's man-power. Not only were the Lahore and Meerut Divisions transferred from General Marshall's command to General Allenby's, but three of the British divisions already in Palestine were 'Indianized' by the substitution of three Indian battalions for British in their infantry brigades and of sappers and miners for their Field Companies (R.E.), while Indians were extensively employed in their Divisional Ammunition Columns and in their transport and medical services. Another division, the 75th, in which a few Indian battalions had been included from its first organization in 1917, was wholly 'Indianized', and the Indian cavalry hitherto in France replaced the bulk of the Yeomanry units in the Desert Mounted Corps; large reinforcements were thus set free to strengthen the armies in France. This was rendered

<sup>1</sup> See vol. iv, p. 197.



possible by the fact that before this date most Indian regiments had raised second, and in some cases third and fourth, battalions, and the process was carried further by drafting companies from battalions already in Mesopotamia and Palestine and grouping them in fours to form new battalions which were assigned numbers from 150 upwards. The battalions from which the companies had been taken were brought up to strength with recruits from India. Later in the year it proved possible to withdraw from Mesopotamia a dozen battalions of Indian infantry for service at Salonika to replace British infantry who had been moved to France, but no Indian battalion reached Salonika in time to share in the dramatic defeat of the Bulgarians or to receive their surrender, though the majority of these battalions were destined to do important work in the period following the Armistice as part of the 'Army of the Black Sea' in occupation of the Caucasus and Constantinople.

The hostility of the Khans of the Bushire hinterland in South Persia involved the employment of over 20,000 fighting men and followers. The defection of Russia and the consequent Turco-German attempt to move eastward across the Caspian Sea to spread the war in the direction of the Indian frontier and to introduce complications in Afghanistan imposed a still further strain on India; and the maintenance of troops on the Caspian necessitated road construction together with the provision of mechanical transport on a large scale in North-West Persia involving large demands on Indian resources. On the other hand the situation in East Africa was such that it could now be left in charge of African soldiers, mainly the greatly multiplied King's African Rifles, and the last of the Indian contingent was withdrawn early in the year.

The withdrawal of the Russians necessitated the extension of the cordon of troops in East Persia to Meshed, and eventually to the Trans-Caspian Railway at 'Ashqabad.

On the North-West Frontier of India the recalcitrancy of the Marri tribes made it necessary to undertake important operations against them in February, March, and April.

These, in brief, were the demands which the prosecution of the war made upon India. How did India respond to the call? The Army in India was, we have seen, in no sense maintained

for meeting external obligations of an Imperial character. The standard of the Indian military establishment was that required for the defence of India's own frontiers. In consequence all the equipment, all the transport, all the supplies were based upon that standard. Yet now India was called upon not merely to safeguard her own frontiers but also to render assistance to the Empire in widely remote theatres of war. How did she rise to this great occasion ?

From the very first day the policy of the Government of India was to give readily to the Home Government of everything whether troops or war material. The total numbers of men, animals, and stores dispatched from Indian ports during the war were :

Personnel . . . . .	1,302,394
Animals . . . . .	172,815
Supplies and stores . . . . .	3,691,836 tons

'As regards supplies, India has been responsible throughout the war for the provision either from India itself or from overseas of everything required for the troops in Mesopotamia both British and Indian, though the assistance of the War Office had to be obtained in procuring certain special items. India has also provided all food-stuffs demanded for the Indian troops serving in East Africa, Egypt, France, and Salonika. Before the war the only troops in India rationed by the State were the British garrison of 75,000 men (for the Indian soldier was fed at his own expense under regimental arrangements) ; towards the close of the war India was rationing about one million men, besides making large shipments of food-stuffs to assist allied troops and civilians in the Eastern Mediterranean.'

The chief additions to the Army in India were 7 British heavy batteries, 46½ Indian cavalry squadrons, 14 Indian mountain batteries, 56 'Sappers and Miners' units, 31 signal units, and 156½ infantry battalions. This represented an increase of 30 per cent. for Indian cavalry squadrons, 117 per cent. for mountain batteries, and 113 per cent. for infantry battalions, while the Sappers and Miners were more than doubled. Moreover, as the establishment of Indian infantry battalions serving overseas was raised from 826 to 1,030, the increase per cent. in personnel was considerably in excess of the increase per cent. in units.

Compared with the expansion of the British Army these figures might seem to be nothing very remarkable, but it should be remembered that the result was achieved by voluntary recruiting alone, without any resort to compulsion, that included in India's vast but variegated population are many races of little value from a military point of view, that the races with martial traditions are limited in numbers, above all that to the bulk of the population of India the war was a far distant thing, hard to realize, harder to appreciate in its meaning for India. When these things are borne in mind India's effort on behalf of the Empire stands out in its true perspective as a great achievement and a factor of immense importance in the war. The parts played by the Punjab, which out of its 20,000,000 inhabitants contributed nearly 500,000 combatants, by Nepal which produced over 50,000 fighting men out of a population of 3,000,000, and by Baluchistan and the North-West Frontier Province which sent over 30,000 recruits from the same population as Nepal, are particularly noticeable. His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught, speaking at Rawalpindi in February 1921, said very truly, 'The achievement of the Punjab was remarkable. Even before the war the Punjab had a name familiar in the military annals of the Empire. During the war the name became a household word, and not only on account of the number of men who joined the colours but also on account of the splendid fighting qualities displayed.' Again, when laying the foundation stone of the All India War Memorial at Delhi and speaking of his past experience of the Indian Army, he said, 'It was an Army of great traditions and splendid discipline, but little did I dream in those days to what still more distant fields the Indian Army would be called or to what immense expansion that great organization would be brought by the strong impulse of loyalty and patriotism'. The record of the Indian Army between August 1914 and November 1918 provides ample justification for this high praise.

Including troops serving in India itself, the net total of cavalry squadrons and infantry battalions which were Indian units and supplied by India up to the date of the signing of the Armistice was :

241 Indian squadrons (including 39 squadrons of Imperial Service Cavalry).

289½ Indian battalions (including 9 battalions of Imperial Service Infantry and excluding 14 Indian battalions lost at Kut).

Other combatant units formed in India during the war were :

10 special sections of field artillery for garrison duty in India.

59 emergency companies of Indian infantry.

76½ special companies of Indian infantry.

15½ companies of ex-Sepoy for garrison duty in India.

16 armoured motor batteries.

19 British and 3 Indian machine-gun companies.

3 machine-gun squadrons.

The maintenance of all these various units at war establishment during a long war often involved the provision of draft reinforcements amounting in the aggregate to more than the original strength of the unit.

The provision of British officers for Indian units was especially difficult. The small British community in India being engaged for the most part in Government service or in industries of national importance offered a very limited scope as a source of recruitment.

Further, 'the pre-war organization of the Army in India, having been based on the requirements of a frontier campaign only had made no provision . . . for a reserve of officers to replace casualties on a large scale or to fill the junior commissioned ranks of newly raised units.' The first step taken was to increase the Indian Army Reserve, the Reserve of British Officers for the Indian Army numbering only forty in August 1914, and this source of recruitment gradually developed until, by the end of October 1918, over 5,300 commissions had been given. Cadet colleges for Regular officers for the Indian Army were opened at Quetta and Wellington, 'and, by arrangement with the War Office, a large number of officers were transferred to the Indian Army on probation from the Special Reserve and Territorial Force <sup>1</sup> or granted temporary commissions from the ranks of British units. The number of British officers added to the Indian Army and Indian Army Reserve

<sup>1</sup> A very large number was taken from the Territorial Force units in India. These units which arrived in India in the autumn of 1914 contained quite a large proportion of men fully up to or above the standard to which the supply of officer material had come down.

... was nearly four times the number on the strength of the Indian Army at the outbreak of the war.' The total number of commissions granted was 9,583, and the total number of British officers sent overseas from India, including both British and Indian Services, was 23,040.

Of Indians of other ranks than officers there were recruited in India during the war 826,868 combatants and 445,592 non-combatants, including 24,368 combatants and 4,803 non-combatants recruited for Imperial Service Units. Of the combatants 136,126 were Punjabi Musalmans, 88,925 were Sikhs, 55,589 were Gurkhas, 49,086 were Rajputs, 40,272 were Jats, and 36,353 were Hindustani Musalmans. 349,688 combatant recruits were enlisted in the Punjab, 163,578 in the United Provinces, and only 7,117 in Bengal.

'An important contribution made by India was the provision of labour for various theatres of war, especially France and Mesopotamia. A wide variety of classes were enlisted for this purpose, many of whom had never before been used in the Army, either as combatants or non-combatants.' There were sent to France 54 labour corps, each of a strength of 1,150, and 6 syce (groom) companies, each of a strength of 210. To Mesopotamia were sent 19 labour corps, 6 syce companies, and 12 porter corps. Indian labour was also supplied to other theatres of war.

The provision of material on the vast scale demanded by the war was a difficult matter for India. India is essentially an agricultural country. Industries are only just beginning to develop. Labour of the quality required in the production of war material hardly exists outside the trained personnel of the ordnance factories, two or three other Government establishments, and a few private engineering firms. Moreover, the average Indian workman is of a low educational standard and possesses only a primitive knowledge of his craft. So he requires a long period of training before he can be counted on to produce any appreciable increase in output. Nor has he any ambition to acquire a knowledge of modern workshop methods and practices. Labour of this quality when employed on such important work as the manufacture of modern war material requires a high proportion of expert European supervision, and this supervision is hard to obtain in India. Further, India produces none of the machinery and few of the tools

and other equipment of a modern workshop. In this respect, as also in the provision of much of the raw material required, she is dependent on outside assistance. For these reasons, development in the manufacture of war stores requiring a high standard of reliability and accuracy of workmanship must necessarily be slow.

'The munition-making resources of the country were first co-ordinated in July 1915 by the Railway Board, which employed a special staff to supervise and develop output. In this way it was possible to make the best use of existing railway workshops, in which a considerable quantity of shell cases were manufactured, as well as a variety of other articles which could not be produced by the Ordnance and other Government factories.' Some efforts were made to utilize men of technical experience who happened to be serving in the ranks of Territorial battalions. The Railway Board also undertook to supply coal to all Railways, Military Services, Overseas Forces, Marine and Royal Navy. 'It was soon found that supply was likely to be in defect of demand, and that powers must be taken by Statute to requisition coal for purposes of the war and to control the distribution of coal for public consumption after the demand for immediate war and quasi-war services had been met. These increased rapidly and it was necessary, therefore, to set up a close control over output as well as consumption.' A Coal Controller was appointed and a system of requisitioning and rationing was introduced.

On the 1st of March 1917 the Indian Munitions Board was created as a temporary Department of the Government of India with the object of devoting especial attention to the control and development of Indian resources with particular reference to war requirements. Its chief functions were to limit and co-ordinate demands for articles not manufactured or produced in India, to apply the manufacturing resources of India to war purposes, thereby reducing demands on shipping, and to organize efficient methods of supplying the forces in the field with the miscellaneous engineering plant and stores required by them.

This Munitions Board concerned itself with the supply of ordnance, hides and leather, railway track, rolling stock and plant, clothing, textiles, boots, tents, jute goods, river-craft, timber, miscellaneous engineering plant and stores; and also

with the 'scrutiny of priority applications for assistance in obtaining goods from the United Kingdom and the United States of America, scrutiny of Government indents on the India Office, control of export of certain materials, [and] control of the distribution of the products of the Indian iron and steel works'.

In all, there were produced in India during the war 145,758 rifles (new and converted), 551,000,000 rifle cartridges, 176 guns, and 1,360,968 shells of every kind.

The Indian tanning industry made an important contribution towards the war by the supply of rough-tanned cow-hides from Madras and Bombay. These 'East India kips' were very largely utilized in the manufacture of upper leather for army boots. In addition to supplies of tanned hides India also furnished large quantities of raw hides to the War Office and to the Italian Government.

India exported to Mesopotamia, East Africa, Aden, and South Persia 1,855 miles of railway track (including 555 miles for Egypt), 229 locomotives, 5,489 vehicles, 13,073 feet of bridging material.

'As the Army requirements of woollen and worsted goods under war conditions exceeded the maximum capacity of the five existing woollen mills in India, it was necessary to import a certain proportion of these materials from home. But the Indian mills were utilized to their utmost, all five having been under engagement to supply the whole of their output to the Board, and to work both day and night. In addition, arrangements were made to develop the supply of blankets from jails and from groups of hand-weavers.'

'The whole of Government's requirements of cotton goods, with the exception of mosquito netting and cotton sewing-thread, were supplied from the products of Indian manufactures.'

'The demand for water transport in the Eastern theatres of war became so heavy that, in 1916, the Government of India found it necessary to form a special agency to organize the work of construction.' Among the craft supplied were 220 barges, 5 stern-wheel tugs, 2 hospital stern-wheelers, 20 motor launches, 22 marine motors, and 110 pontoons.

228,076 tons of timber were supplied. 'Every effort was made to substitute indigenous timber for foreign supplies in

order to reduce the demand on shipping to a minimum and to encourage the use of the locally grown article.' The greater part of the timber supplied was in the form of sawn beams, planks, and scantlings, and much difficulty arose owing to the very limited number of saw mills and the impossibility of importing additional plant.

An enormous amount of miscellaneous engineering plant and stores was also supplied, including equipment for the docks and workshops which were constructed in Mesopotamia and East Africa.

The only works producing steel in India were the Tata iron and steel works at Sakchi in Bengal. Over the output of their steel, Government, with the ready consent of the management, exercised complete control. The principal portion of the steel output took the form of rails and fastenings for railway work. From these works 985 track miles of railway material were supplied and in addition large quantities of rolled steel sections.

A floating workshop for use at Basra was constructed at Calcutta. A yard capable of building twenty large river-craft at a time was laid down at Karachi. At the Calcutta yard steel barges and two large floating bridges were constructed. Bombay constructed barges both in steel and in wood.

The Central Research Institute at Karachi enormously increased their issue of vaccines and sera. The yearly issue during the war averaged 1,514,551 cubic centimetres as against 18,423, the average of the two years prior to the war. This included typhoid vaccine, T.A.B. vaccine, cholera, plague, and other vaccines.

India also contributed 7 bacteriological laboratories, 1 malaria laboratory, 43 sets of X-ray apparatus, and 6 hospital river-boats. Six hospital ships were also equipped and manned in India, one of which, the *Loyalty*, was equipped and maintained by ruling chiefs. The hospital accommodation provided in India comprised 660 beds for British officers, 20,790 beds for British rank and file, 31,820 beds for Indian rank and file.

A Central Mechanical Transport Stores Depot was formed at Rawalpindi, and to it were affiliated the purchasing agencies for procuring available mechanical transport stores in India. Through these agencies large quantities of spare parts, tyres, and mechanical transport material generally, were purchased



from markets in India and dispatched for the various forces overseas. The principal mechanical transport vehicles sent overseas were 72 motor lorries, 102 motor cars, 117 motor cycles, 675 motor vans, 72 motor ambulances, 8 armoured cars, and 60 rail tractors.

The approximate value of the equipment and supplies sent overseas during the war was £34,408,000. Some of the more important items of supply were, in tons : rice, 219,889 ; flour, 133,025 ; atta (coarse flour), 322,587 ; grain for animals (i. e. barley, oats, and bran), 545,788 ; hay and chopped straw, 771,737 ; ghi (clarified butter), 26,214 ; sugar, 35,602 ; tea, 6,502 ; firewood, 603,223.

Two hundred and twenty-nine vessels were chartered. For the river flotilla in Mesopotamia 156 steamers, 271 launches, and 531 barges were provided or arranged for. Eighty-five British war vessels were repaired and refitted at Bombay, which formed an important depot.

India was precluded by Act of Parliament from paying for military operations carried on beyond its external frontiers by forces charged upon the revenues of India. But at the first meeting of the Imperial Legislative Council of India held after the outbreak of war, a resolution was unanimously passed on the motion of an Indian non-official member to the effect that the people of India, in addition to the military assistance being offered to the Empire, would wish to share in the heavy financial burden imposed by the war on the United Kingdom. The Viceroy, in forwarding the resolution to the Secretary of State, pointed out that India was bound to suffer financially through the falling off of customs and railway receipts, could ordinarily have asked the Home Government to bear the whole cost of the Expeditionary Force, and could then have effected counter-savings. But this was not in accordance with the wishes of the people and the Government of India. He therefore proposed that India should accept such portion of the cost of the force as would have fallen upon India had the troops remained in the country.

This proposal was accepted by His Majesty's Government and resolutions were passed by both Houses of Parliament permitting the payment of the contribution from Indian resources. The ordinary pay and other ordinary charges of any troops dispatched as well as the ordinary charges of any

vessels belonging to the Government of India that might be employed should be chargeable to the revenues of the Government of India.

The net amount which was paid under these resolutions was £26.4 millions, but in addition the Government of India, with the general assent of the Imperial Legislative Council, proposed to offer His Majesty's Government a lump sum of £100 millions (rather more than a year's pre-war revenue) as a special contribution by India towards the expenses of the war. £78 millions were raised in India for this purpose by war loans, and as regards the balance the Government of India took over the liability for interest on an equivalent amount of the British Government war loan.

Other contributions towards the expenses of the war were made and the total net contribution from Indian revenues towards the cost of the war amounted to about £160 millions.

This, in summary, is how India translated into effective action her original determination to unite with the rest of the Empire in resisting the German attack upon the freedom of the world. The following chapters will record the part which Indian troops took in the actual fighting that after four terrible years of conflict ended in the complete overthrow of Germany and her allies.

### APPENDIX TO CHAPTER III

#### THE EXPANSION OF THE INDIAN ARMY <sup>1</sup>

*By C. T. Atkinson*

As already stated (p. 184) the first increase in the pre-war establishment of the Indian Army took the form of raising additional companies in some of the battalions 'linked' with those already on active service, but this was rather an expedient for meeting the unexpectedly heavy wastage of the war and merely served to keep existing units up to strength. Only one new battalion was added to the Indian Army in the course

<sup>1</sup> This Appendix has been contributed by Mr. C. T. Atkinson, who has also, with Sir Francis Younghusband's consent, supplemented the military details in the various chapters of the narrative.





SIR CHARLES MONRO

of the first twelve months of war, a provisional battalion of the 67th Punjabis being put on the establishment in March 1915 as the 2/67th Punjabis. Not till December 1915 was another new unit formed, when a second battalion was added to the 123rd Outram's Rifles, and the war had lasted over two years before a wing of the 124th Baluchis, then in garrison at Bushire, was formed into a separate new battalion, the head-quarter wing being also recruited up to full strength. Up to that time, indeed, recruiting, though exceeding both anticipations and previous records, had hardly been sufficient to allow of any considerable expansion of the Indian Army: it had replenished the gaps in the ranks made by the heavy casualties in France, Gallipoli, and Mesopotamia, had allowed the reconstruction after the fall of Kut of the Indian battalions of the garrison, and had provided a good supply of drafts so that at the end of 1916 General Maude could start his great campaign for the recapture of Kut with his Indian battalions well up to strength and full of well-trained men. But at the end of 1916 India had not got on active service very much more than the equivalent of the Indian Expeditionary Forces put into the field by the end of 1914.

It is from the autumn of 1916, when General Sir Charles Monro arrived in India, that the development of a new system of recruiting, the consequent expansion of the Indian Army, and the great increase in India's share of the Empire's burden should be dated. A Central Recruiting Board was set up, the assistance of civil departments and Indian gentlemen of local influence or military connexions was invoked, modifications in terms of service were adopted, rates of pay and pensions were increased. The old system of recruiting men according to 'classes', by which battalions or companies were formed exclusively from men of one of the regular military classes,<sup>1</sup> was replaced by a territorial system under which any recruiting officer enrolled men of any class and not from one special class only. Further, new or little-recruited 'classes' like the Ahirs, Gujars, and Gaur Brahmins of the south-east of the Punjab were encouraged to enlist. Among other new sources of recruits the Kachins and Chins of Burma were tapped with excellent results, a 70th Burma Rifles coming into existence in

<sup>1</sup> Thus a Frontier Force Rifle regiment might consist of one company of Sikhs, one of Punjabi Mohammedans, one of Dogras and one of Afridis.

September 1917 and being increased in less than a year to a regiment of four battalions, which did exceptionally good service in suppressing the troublesome Moplah rising of 1921 and was retained (as the 20th Burma Regiment) when the majority of the newly raised units were disbanded and even after not a few old regiments disappeared in the organization of 1923. In the same way a 50th Kumaon Rifles, originally raised as a 4th Battalion of the 39th Garhwalis, represented another successful experiment in extending the recruiting area, though a Punjabi Christian battalion brought into the Line as the 71st Punjabis in October 1917, and a Mahar battalion raised (as the 111th Mahars) at the same time did not survive the reductions after the war.

As a result of these new methods the supply of recruits increased enormously. In 1917 nearly as many recruits were taken as had come in up to the end of 1916, and in consequence the number of additional battalions rose to over 50 before the end of the year. It was this which made it possible to form the 17th and 18th Indian Divisions for service in Mesopotamia, to transfer the Lahore and Meerut Divisions to Palestine, and to increase the small Indian contingent in Egypt. Several additional companies were at the same time added to each of the three regiments of Sappers and Miners and additional batteries of mountain artillery were raised. Then with the crisis in France in March 1918 the call on India was increased and additional drafts on the man-power of India did much to keep the British Armies in France up to strength indirectly, if not as in 1914 by the dispatch of Indian units to that country. The expansion of the Indian Army by another 50 battalions between March and May 1918 allowed of the 'Indianization' of the bulk of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force. This time not only were 2nd Battalions added to some twenty and more existing regiments,<sup>1</sup> but both in Egypt and in Mesopotamia new regiments were formed by drafting companies from existing battalions and grouping them in fours to form new battalions. The companies drafted were replaced by recruits and the new battalions grouped in regiments by threes, receiving numbers from 150 to 156.<sup>2</sup> Throughout the rest of 1918 the process

<sup>1</sup> In the end all but 40 of the pre-war units raised a new battalion and several raised two or even three.

<sup>2</sup> The highest numbered unit in existence in 1914 was the 130th Baluchis (Jacob's Rifles).

of raising additional battalions went forward. In July a two battalion 131st (United Provinces Police) Regiment was raised, followed by several other local units such as 1/140th Patiala Regiment, 1/141st Bikaner Regiment.<sup>1</sup> In August three new cavalry regiments were formed, followed by four more in October, and corresponding increases were made in the mountain artillery and Sappers and Miners, the enlistment of over 300,000 recruits in the course of 1918 providing ample material for this expansion. The majority of these new units never came into action, though the army which General Allenby commanded in September 1918 contained nearly twenty battalions not in existence before the war, including over half a dozen battalions of the new series from 150 onwards, while several others were actively engaged in Mesopotamia; but the importance of the great increase in the Indian Army which General Monro had inaugurated and successfully carried through is not to be measured by the actual fighting done by the additional units. Their existence had made it possible to reinforce Picardy from Palestine and yet maintain the British forces facing the Turk at a strength sufficient to drive him out of the war. Had not the Bulgarians been so prompt to quit the sinking ship Indian units would have had a chance of taking an effective part in the operations in Macedonia, and at the end of the war India was the one portion of the British Empire whose effective man-power was still increasing. When the difficulties not only of recruiting, raising, and equipping so largely augmented an army, but of providing it with British officers, are taken into consideration, the expansion of the Indian Army in the years 1917 and 1918 will be seen to rank high among great administrative achievements, to redound greatly to the credit of those who conceived it and carried it out, and to stand comparison not only with what the Dominions accomplished in the way of improvising their contingents but with the Mother Country's effort in raising, training, and equipping the 'New Armies'.

<sup>1</sup> These were not Imperial Service troops.

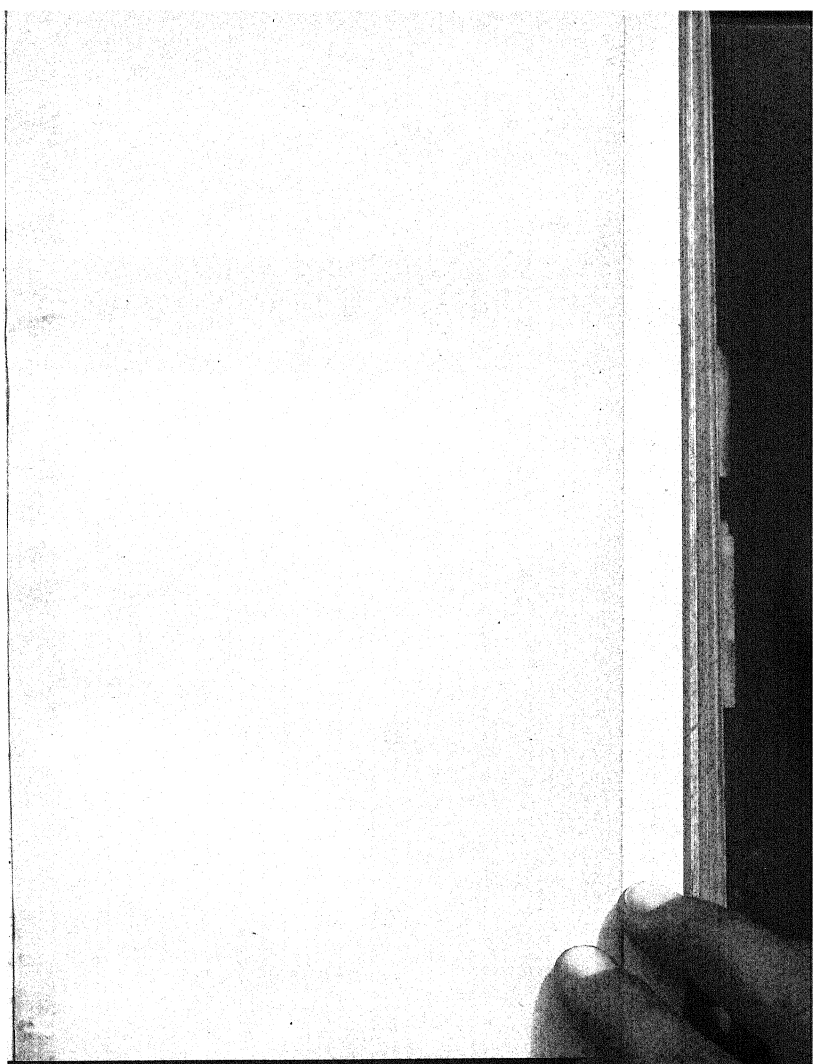
## CHAPTER IV

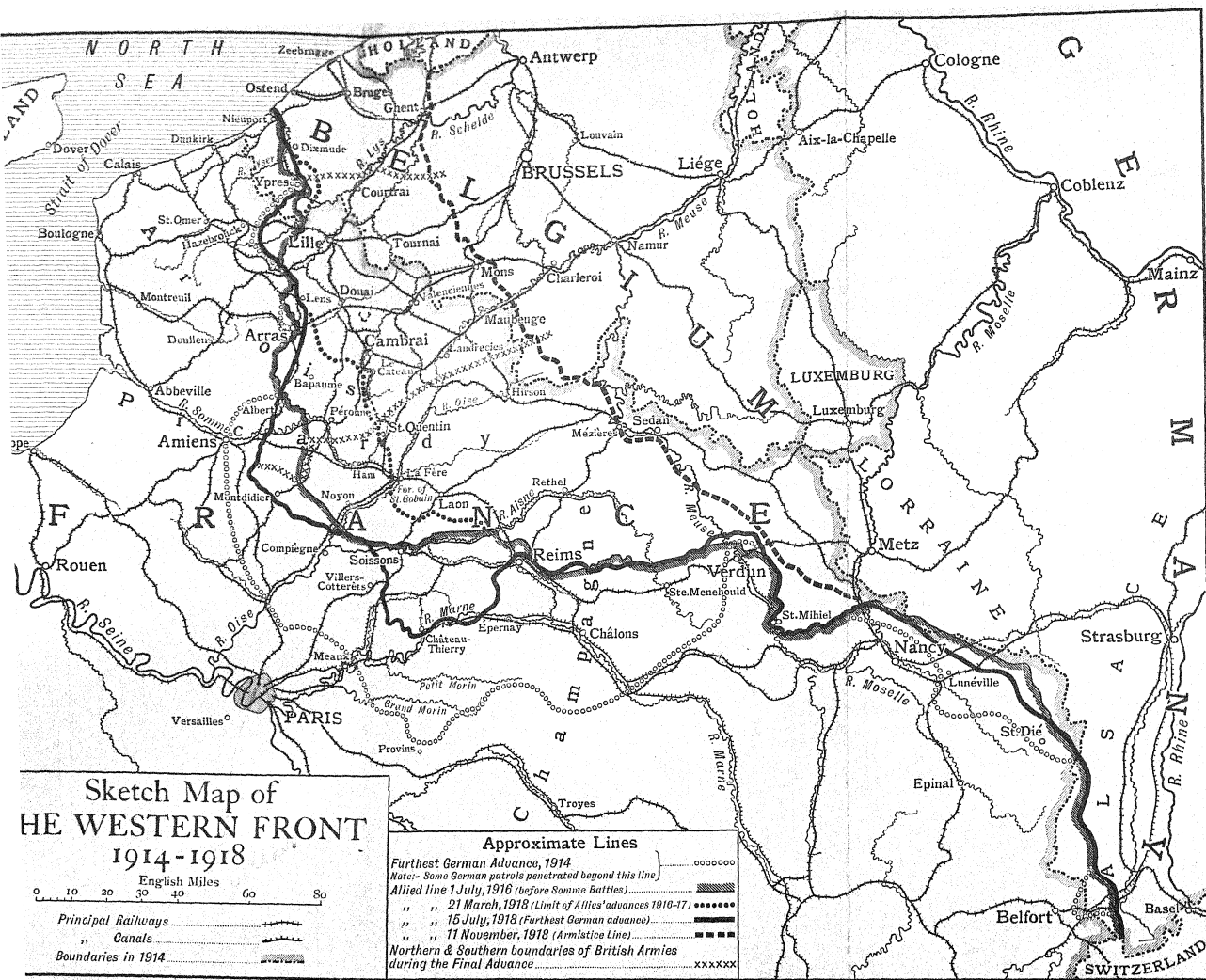
### OPERATIONS IN FRANCE, 1914

WHETHER the military forces of the British Empire should concentrate in France, or whether we should take advantage of our naval position and sea-power to land forces in other parts of Europe and attack Austria or other of Germany's allies as they declared themselves, was one of the many momentous questions which had to be decided after the first great onrush of the Germans had been thrown back at the Marne. Some were said to be in favour of a landing at Salonika and an advance into Serbia, both to succour that gallant little country and to discourage Bulgaria, Rumania, Greece, and Turkey from entering the war against us. It was an attractive plan on paper, but the Germanic Powers, occupying a central position, would have been able to move troops to meet the British forces, and in the meanwhile France herself was in dire need of all the help we could afford her. Lord Kitchener was emphatically in favour of keeping the small British forces in closest co-operation with the French while the full military resources of the Empire were being gradually developed. Only thus, he believed, could France be secured; and only thus could be preserved the precious nucleus of the mighty British Imperial Force of the future. At all costs, he held, must the French and British keep together. This view was adopted by the Government and the great decision was made in September that Indian troops—that is Indian Divisions in which roughly one-third are British—should proceed to France.

Action had already been taken with a view to moving Indian troops, at least to Egypt. The Lahore (3rd) Division and the Meerut (7th) Division had received orders to mobilize on August 8th, 1914. On August 24th the former had embarked at Karachi and disembarked at Suez on September 9th to 15th. But with the exception of one brigade it very shortly re-embarked and arrived at Marseilles on September 26th. The







Meerut Division embarked at Karachi on September 21st and likewise was ordered—while at sea—to go on to France.

The enthusiasm of the Indian troops at thus being sent to France was unbounded. In the South African war no Indian regiments had been employed—though British regiments had been sent from India and reached Natal at a highly critical juncture when the main forces from England had not yet landed in South Africa. Indians were keenly disappointed at losing that opportunity of service. They were now correspondingly elated at being thought fit to fight in Europe itself against the most powerful military nation in the world. They were also eager to see the fabulous <sup>1</sup> Europe of which they had heard so much but which few of them had ever visited. So they arrived at Marseilles in the highest spirits.

There a magnificent reception awaited them. The French were no less glad to see them than they were to see the French. It was a brilliant early autumn day as the great liners filled with Indian troops steamed majestically into the harbour. Thousands and thousands of French and African troops from across the Mediterranean had also landed there; and the quays were packed with motley crowds. But there was something strangely significant in the arrival of these troops from distant India coming to fight in France—coming to fight against the common enemy which threatened France and Britain and India alike. The sensitive French were thrilled with emotion. In the south of France they had doubtless heard of the British Expeditionary Force, but they had necessarily seen nothing of it and they were heartened by this tangible evidence that they were not being left to fight alone. They thronged in multitudes to the Indian camp, and at stations on the way up to the front the kindest reception was given to the troops.

And here may be a fitting place to record that the Indians by their soldierly bearing, their dignity and their innate courtesy and good manners so characteristic of Orientals, made a particularly favourable impression on the French people during their stay in France. The French are peculiarly appreciative of the graces of life and the Indians had that in their manners which especially appealed to them.

So far all was warmth and sunshine and good cheer, but now strain and suffering to the very limit of endurance was to come.

<sup>1</sup> See vol. i, p. 36.



Sir James Willcocks the Commander of the Indian Corps landed at Marseilles on September 30th and on October 3rd reported himself to Sir John French. Antwerp had not then fallen, and great hopes were entertained of the Russians who were advancing through Galicia and would, it was expected, draw off many German divisions from France and Belgium. But before the end of October all such hopes had vanished. A German attack of the most weighty and determined character had developed; and the whole British Army was in peril of being driven into the sea.

Antwerp fell on October 9th. The Germans far from weakening their line were steadily reinforcing it and were concentrating for a mighty thrust at Calais and the Channel ports. The French with the aid of the small, though efficient, British Army had been able to throw back the great German lunge at Paris. But they had scarcely strength by themselves to maintain the whole long line from Switzerland to the English Channel, and the brunt of the German attack on the Channel ports would fall upon the little British Army which had already gone through the fearful strain of the retreat from Mons. Upon these devoted troops a terrific storm was now gathering and it was in these circumstances that the Indian Corps appeared upon the scene. The Lahore Division detrained round Arques and Blendecques on October 20th and started to march to the fighting area next day.

The Allies were then holding Ypres and Messines, but the Germans held Lille and the town of La Bassée to the south west. The Ist Corps, commanded by Sir Douglas Haig, was trying to push forward north-east of Ypres but was encountering increasing opposition. The IVth Corps (Sir H. Rawlinson) due east of Ypres was already heavily engaged and was hard put to it to hold on. The cavalry under General Allenby were between the right of the IVth Corps and the river Douve, also unable to get forward, and on their right the IIIrd (General Pulteney) and the IIInd Corps commanded by Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, were opposing the Germans west of Lille. Not only had the Allied advance on Lille been brought to a standstill but the Germans had passed from the defensive to the offensive and were superior to the Allies alike in numbers of men and in weight of artillery. Since October 20th Smith-Dorrien and Pulteney had been carrying on a most gallant

fight against very superior numbers and it was to support the II<sup>nd</sup> Corps that the first Indian troops to arrive—the Lahore Division under Major-General Watkis—were destined. But actually the first troops from India to be engaged came into action in support of General Allenby's cavalry, for the Connaught Rangers, the 57th Rifles, and the 129th Baluchis were pushed up to the Messines ridge in the course of October 22<sup>nd</sup>. The 57th Rifles came into the fighting line on that same evening and actually repulsed a small German attack, while the Baluchis took over an outpost line between Hollebeke and Oosttaverne next morning. Four days later, on the 26<sup>th</sup> of October, they were engaged in an attack from Wytschaete upon the German position and there had experience of the depressing conditions under which fighting had to be carried on—conditions of cold, of rain, and mud, of imperfect and water-logged trenches, trying enough for British troops but far more trying for men accustomed to a sunny climate and only just arrived from the heat of India.

Indian regiments were only two-thirds of the Indian Corps ; the Indian Corps was only one of the five corps of the then British Army in France and the British Army was only a small portion of the whole line of defence. But the point to note is that these Indian troops had arrived at the most critical moment.

No very definite results were obtained from the fighting on the 26<sup>th</sup>. The 129th Baluchis advanced quite close to the German trenches, but had to be recalled as they could not be supported. In the three following days the enemy contented themselves with bombarding the British position, but on October 30<sup>th</sup> the storm broke in all its fury and this day and more particularly the two following were, so far as the British Army was concerned, the most critical perhaps of the whole war. Roughly speaking, seven corps of the Allied armies were opposing twelve German corps, whilst the enemy enjoyed enormous artillery superiority both numerically and in calibre. The Allied line was very very thin and, if it broke, the enemy would be at Calais commanding the English Channel with their guns and the little British Army, from which the Great British Army of the future was to grow, would be crushed out of existence.

The enemy bombarded our positions round Ypres with great

violence. Our weak trenches were hammered with heavy shells and practically obliterated. At the same time the attack was pressed home by overwhelming masses of infantry. The Cavalry Corps (to which the 129th Baluchis and the 57th Wilde's Rifles were attached) became so weak numerically that retirement was inevitable.

But still what Lord French calls 'the thin and straggling line of tired out British soldiers which stood between the Empire and its practical ruin as an independent first-class Power' was maintained. The enemy had been gradually reinforced till they had reached about double our number. Seven British infantry divisions and three cavalry divisions were extended on a front of from 25 to 26 miles. The line of defence was stretched, out of sheer necessity, far beyond its natural and normal power of defence. But though bent it remained unbroken.

The worst day of all was October 31st. Allenby's Cavalry Corps—fighting on foot—had to hold the Wytschaete-Messines Ridge, against the determined attack of 2½ German corps. It was the centre of the line and had it given way disaster would have befallen the entire left wing of the Allies. It was stated that the German Emperor himself was present in this part of the front and captured correspondence showed that he regarded the success of the attack now being made on Ypres to be of vital importance to the issue of the war. Haig's corps immediately in front of Ypres was being frightfully pressed. At one point a break had been made and disaster was imminent till by extraordinary resource and bravery the line was restored.

It is not necessary to describe what took place on the whole battle front but only to single out the part played by Indian troops in this tremendous drama. In the early hours of October 31st, after having been heavily bombarded, Messines was attacked by a strong force of German infantry. The Indian troops were exhausted—as were all the troops engaged, it was impossible to relieve or reinforce them, and the Germans swarmed into the trenches of the 57th Wilde's Rifles. Most of the British officers were killed or wounded, but the remnant and the Indian officers fought stubbornly on, one company making a most gallant counter-attack to extricate another which was in special trouble, and eventually they effected

a retirement before nightfall to Messines itself. Sikhs from the plains of the Punjab, Afridis from the Afghan border, Dogras from the foot-hills of the Himalaya, fighting together under British leadership here in distant France had valiantly done their part in maintaining the attenuated line. Support by British troops was of course needed, but strange as the surroundings were to Indian soldiers and unaccustomed as they were to this terrific form of fighting they also helped to support the British troops and they too can claim a share in the eventual victory. So also may the 129th Baluchis who were holding a wood and covering a chateau near Hollebeke and who on the morning of November 1st attacked and captured a farm. The first Victoria Cross credited to Indian soldiers in the war was won on the 31st of October by Sepoy Khudadad of the 129th Baluchis.<sup>1</sup> This gallant man was the only survivor of the team of one of the machine guns who went on fighting their gun to the last in face of overwhelming odds: finally the Germans rushed it and bayoneted the whole team, not before it had inflicted heavy losses upon them. Sepoy Khudadad, though so badly wounded as to be left for dead, managed in the end to reach a place of safety.

Having thus contributed to the maintenance of our position about Ypres at the very moment when it was most seriously threatened these two Indian battalions were moved south<sup>2</sup> to rejoin the main body of the Indian Corps who had relieved Smith-Dorrien's Corps near La Bassée. To the movements and activities of this Corps it is now necessary to turn attention.

The Germans opposed by our IIInd Corps, Smith-Dorrien's, had been driven back by him almost from Béthune to the Aubers Ridge, but had here checked his advance and all his efforts had failed to win possession of La Bassée. Smith-Dorrien had hoped to cut the road between La Bassée and Lille, but soon found he could at best keep the Germans out of Béthune. He had been vigorously counter-attacked on

<sup>1</sup> The *London Gazette* of the 7th of December 1914 contained the names of two Indian soldiers as having been awarded the Victoria Cross: No. 1909 Naik Darwan Sing Negi, 1st Battalion, 39th Garhwal Rifles, and No. 4050 Sepoy Khudadad, 129th Duke of Connaught's own Baluchis. Naik Darwan Sing Negi earned it on November 23-4, near Festubert (see below, p. 213).

<sup>2</sup> Both battalions had suffered very heavy losses, over 300 in the case of the 57th, 200 in that of the 129th, but they were warmly congratulated by the cavalry commander on the fine fight they had put up.



October 20th and obliged to fall back three days later from his advanced position on the Aubers Ridge to a position in the lower ground in front of Givenchy and Neuve Chapelle. It was at the moment when the British were sorely strained by ten days' continuous fighting that the Indian troops began to come up and take their place in the line. This first instalment consisted of the Lahore Division under Lieutenant-General Watkis ; but little more than one of its three infantry brigades was at the moment available, for three-fourths of the Ferozepore Brigade, as has been seen, were with the Cavalry Corps near Messines, and the Sirhind Brigade was still in Egypt.

The third Brigade, the Jullundur Brigade, was immediately sent into action on the left of the II<sup>nd</sup> Corps and on the night of October 24th/25th took over trenches north-east of Neuve Chapelle which had been occupied by French cavalry. The 15th Sikhs, 34th Sikh Pioneers, and 59th Scinde Rifles were the Indian battalions employed. They had to occupy a line far too long for their numbers. They had to carry out reliefs at night when new to the country, to the ditches and wire entanglements. They were constantly being attacked ; they were under incessant shell fire ; and short rations, little sleep, soaking wet were for these first days of their fighting service in France the lot of these Indian soldiers.

Two attacks were made by the Germans on this section of the line on the 28th of October, but both were repulsed with loss. On the other hand a German attack on October 27th on Neuve Chapelle occupied by the 7th and 9th British Brigades was successful, creating a dangerous salient. The 9th Bhopals of the Ferozepore Brigade were at once ordered to counter-attack with the object of taking the enemy in flank. Establishing touch with the Royal West Kents, who had held their ground magnificently, on the south of the village, the Bhopals caught the Germans in flank and drove them back some distance, doing useful service at a critical moment.

There was, however, still great danger of a break in the line, for there was a considerable gap between the Bhopals and two companies of the 47th Sikhs on their left.<sup>1</sup> This gap was filled up in the darkness by the 21st Company of Sappers and Miners who, so urgent was the necessity, had to be employed

<sup>1</sup> These companies formed the reserve of the Jullundur Brigade which was itself very hard pressed and could ill afford to spare them.

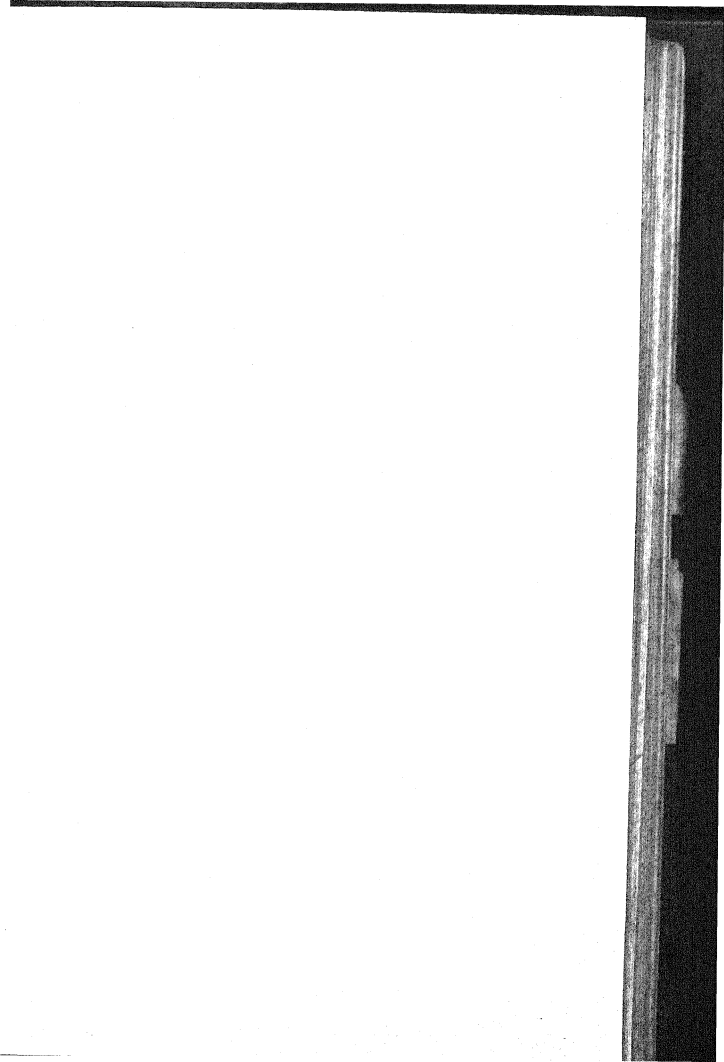
as infantry. On the other side of the 47th Sikhs was the 20th Company of Sappers and Miners.

On the 28th, after our artillery had bombarded the village for half an hour, the Sikhs and the Sappers and Miners advanced to attack it. They advanced across open ground. As they drew near the Germans in the front line retired, and the pursuit was carried into the streets of the village with the accompaniment of very heavy fighting from house to house. At the cross-roads in the centre of the village the troops came under machine-gun fire both from the houses in the village itself and from machine guns posted outside the village. Desperate charges were made to stop it but without success, and at the moment when Major Davidson, commanding the 47th, was preparing for a final effort, the enemy came on in overwhelming numbers, while the machine-gun fire was redoubled. Had help been at hand to complete the work which the Sikhs and Sappers and Miners had so well begun, Neuve Chapelle would probably have been retained, but no reinforcements were available and there was nothing for it but retirement, with additional heavy losses while retreating under hot fire. Eventually only 140 out of the 289 Sikhs engaged in the fight got back to the trenches, while the losses of the Sappers and Miners came to nearly 120, including all the 8 British officers with the two companies.

It had not been possible with the force available to recapture Neuve Chapelle; but the Indian troops had shown a splendid fighting spirit, and had well earned the special mention in Sir John French's dispatch of the 20th of November 1914, 'on the 28th October especially the 47th Sikhs and the 20th and 21st Companies of the 3rd Sappers and Miners distinguished themselves by their gallant conduct in the attack on Neuve Chapelle, losing heavily in officers and men'.

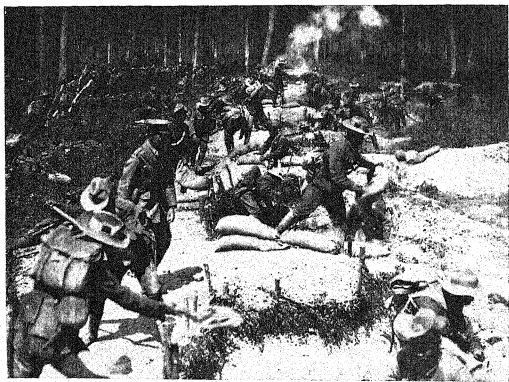
While the fighting described above was taking place the remainder of the Indian Corps were continuing to arrive in France and to make their way up towards the fighting line. The Meerut Division, commanded by Lieutenant-General C. A. Anderson, came up to the front on the 29th of October. A few days later the Secunderabad Cavalry Brigade and the Jodhpur Lancers came up, and only the Sirhind Brigade of the Lahore Division, which was still in Egypt, was now wanting to make the Indian Army Corps complete.

The line taken over by the Indian Corps in relief of the





SIKHS (under LT. SMYTHE, V.C.) returning from the trenches



GURKHAS GOING INTO ACTION

main body of the II<sup>nd</sup> Corps<sup>1</sup> extended from Givenchy (two miles west of La Bassée) northward round the rear of Neuve Chapelle to Fauquissart. It was taken over during the night of the 29th of October—just immediately before the battle round Ypres was reaching its highest intensity. It was taken over in mud and rain, under the most miserable conditions for Indian soldiery. The Germans at this time made no great general attack on that portion of the line which was held by the Indian Corps but delivered a series of local attacks at various weak points in the position. The majority of these attacks were completely repulsed, but more than one success was scored. Thus on the night of October 29th/30th, the night after the Corps had taken over from Smith-Dorrien, the enemy attacked the trench held by the 2/8th Gurkhas of the Bareilly Brigade, Meerut Division, near la Quinque Rue. The trench was no more than a ditch, which was shelled through all the following day—the 30th October—but the Gurkhas drove back several attacks until their ammunition began to fall short. Then the remainder of the defenders were taken in the rear, the front trenches had to be abandoned, and the remnants of the battalion, reinforced by a battalion of British infantry, held out in the support trenches. Five British and two Gurkha officers were killed and three British and one Gurkha officer wounded. It was a hard experience for a most gallant battalion on their very first day in the firing line.

The Germans scored another local success in an attack on the 2/2nd Gurkhas of the Dehra Dun Brigade on the 2nd of November. This battalion was occupying trenches north-north-west of Neuve Chapelle. The attack was opened with a storm of high explosives, the trenches and their defenders were blown up, and the Germans occupied the position. A counter-attack was made with the greatest gallantry, but both the British officers in command and also the Gurkha officers were killed. In fact every officer in the front trenches gave his life, and the total losses of the battalion were seven British officers killed and one wounded; four Gurkha officers killed and three wounded. It was a dispiriting day; but even so

<sup>1</sup> The portions of the II<sup>nd</sup> Corps which were thus relieved by the Indian Corps had almost immediately to be thrown into the fight again, some in support of the Cavalry Corps at Messines, the majority to relieve the even more shattered and exhausted 7th Division on the right of Sir Douglas Haig's position in the Ypres Salient, where their assistance was invaluable.

a line was patched up in rear, the German advance was checked, and on the 5th of November British battalions were brought up and the support line trenches were retaken. After this for some time the enemy made no fresh attempt at an attack on any scale. Indeed it was rather the Indian Corps who showed themselves the more aggressive, being exceedingly active in patrol work and trying several small local attacks and raids, in which great initiative and resource was displayed by many officers and men. In few parts of the line were the Germans as persistently worried as by the Indian Corps.

On the 12th of November Lord Roberts visited the Corps head-quarters to hearten the Indians up in their depressing surroundings. He had served for forty-one years in India and was as devoted to the Indian Army as the Indian Army was to him. It was a bitter day when he arrived, with a cold raw east wind blowing. In simple words he told them how moved he was to find himself among troops by whose side he had fought in so many campaigns. Many persons had feared that the strange surroundings in which they had to fight would be too severe for Indian troops. But he had never shared that fear. He had fought with them too often in every kind of climate and against every kind of enemy not to be sure that there were no conditions so hard that they would not do their duty as soldiers. The fight might be long, for they must not think that the enemy was already defeated. He was strong still, very strong, and his organization was very great. But the Empire and its Allies were strong too, and would become stronger. They were even now only beginning to organize for war. So let every man do his utmost till the enemy was defeated. In this way he would do his duty to the Empire to which he belonged, and the glory of his deed would live for ever in India.<sup>1</sup>

So spoke the veteran soldier for the last time to his comrades. Three days later he was dead. In spite of the piercing cold he had discarded his greatcoat as the Indian troops were not wearing theirs. He was straightway stricken with pneumonia and died—but died among the men he loved and within hearing of the enemy's guns.

By the 23rd of November the enemy had carried his trenches to within a few yards of our line, and at dawn on that day he

<sup>1</sup> See *The Indian Corps in France*, pp. 92-3.

attacked with hand grenades the section east of Festubert. The 34th Pioneers were forced out of their trenches, and by 1.30 p.m. most of the line of the 58th Rifles and the whole of the front of the 34th Pioneers and 9th Bhopals had been lost. Only the stubborn defence made by the right and support companies of the 58th and by the 2nd Black Watch on their right, with the fine leadership of Colonel Southey commanding the 57th Wilde's Rifles and 129th Baluchis (both of which battalions had returned from the Messines area early in the month) prevented a big break in the line. Instructions now came that the original line must be made good before dawn, and after a preliminary artillery bombardment of the enemy's new position an infantry attack was launched at 4.30 p.m. and was finally carried through. But the fighting went on all night, and it was only towards morning that the trenches were finally cleared and reoccupied. In accomplishing this task specially fine work was done by some of the 1/39th Garhwalis and 57th Rifles who, headed by a gallant R.E. officer, Lt. Robson, by Captain Acworth (55th Coke's Rifles, attached 57th) and Naik Darwan Sing Negi of the Garhwalis, worked along a trench from traverse to traverse, clearing the way by throwing bombs, after which parties of bayonet men rushed forward and occupied each bay in turn. The Naik, though twice wounded, continued to fight on, was among the first to rush round into each successive bay, and gave a magnificent example of courage and endurance. He was deservedly awarded the V.C. The 6th Jats, 2/8th Gurkhas, and 58th Rifles all distinguished themselves in re-establishing the position.

The remainder of November passed without special incident, and on the 1st of December the Corps had the honour of a visit from the King-Emperor. It was an unexpected visit, and His Majesty's gracious sympathy and keen personal interest in the well-being of the soldiers gave great encouragement to the Indian Corps. A week later, on the 7th of December, the Sirhind Brigade arrived from Egypt and rejoined the Lahore Division.

During the early days of December, as Sir John French wrote in his dispatch of the 2nd of February 1915, certain indications along the whole front of the Allied line induced the French commanders and himself to believe that the enemy had withdrawn considerable forces from the western theatre

of war. Arrangements were therefore made with the commander of the 8th French Army for an attack to be begun on the morning of the 14th of December. Two French corps and a brigade of the IIInd British Corps attacked near Messines, and the Indian Corps were directed to co-operate by containing the enemy in their front. On the 16th of December therefore a battalion of the Ferozepore Brigade attacked the German trenches opposite Givenchy, and severe fighting followed but without any special result. On the 17th of December the Indian Corps, though now urgently in need of relief and rest, was ordered to demonstrate and to seize every favourable opportunity which might offer for capturing any of the enemy trenches.

Accordingly in the very early morning of the 19th of December began what may be called the battle of Givenchy, in which Givenchy was lost and recaptured, and which ended on the 23rd in the position being restored very much to its original condition. Though some of the front trenches in low-lying ground north of the village were not recovered, the all-important Givenchy knoll was won back.

The Meerut Division held the line south of Neuve Chapelle, and they were to attack the opposite German trenches and consolidate the captured position. Amid wind and rain on the night of 18th/19th December the attack was made with great dash by the Leicesters and 2/3rd Gurkhas of the Garhwal Brigade. There was initial success and the German front-line trenches were captured on a short front. But the Germans counter-attacked in strength and with the use of bombs forced us to retire from the positions won.

An attack by the Sirhind Brigade of the Lahore Division, who occupied the line from Givenchy north towards Neuve Chapelle, was also at first successful, two lines of the enemy's trenches being captured before dawn with little loss. But at daybreak it was found that the position was practically untenable. Both flanks were in the air, and a supporting attack which was late in starting and was therefore conducted in daylight failed, although attempted with the greatest gallantry and resolution. By dusk the whole of the captured trenches had to be abandoned and our men fell back on the original line.

From daylight on the 20th of December the enemy directed



a heavy artillery fire against the whole Indian front, and infantry attacks followed. Givenchy was the centre point of the attack, and by 10 a.m. the Germans had driven back the Ferozepore men who were holding it and had captured a considerable part of the village. Then followed determined efforts on our part to recover what had been lost. About 5 p.m. a gallant attack by the 1st Manchester Regiment had effected this object and cleared the enemy out of the two lines of trenches to the north-east, but the Germans were still in possession of trenches to the north of the village. Accordingly a further attack was made on this side by the 47th Sikhs and 7th Dragoon Guards at 1 a.m. on the 21st, but this effort and another made at 4 a.m. both failed. Northward again similar misfortunes occurred. The 2/2nd Gurkhas had been forced to retire and had left the flank of the Seaforth Highlanders exposed. Supports had therefore to be pushed up to fill the gap, and first a brigade and then a division from the general Army reserve had to be sent to support the Indian Corps. With this assistance a hold on Givenchy had been obtained by 5 p.m. on the 21st. On the 22nd Sir Douglas Haig took over command from Sir James Willcocks; by evening the position at Givenchy itself was practically re-established, and during the 23rd the enemy's activities ceased.

It had been a hard hand-to-hand struggle of the fiercest description and fought out under most adverse conditions in trenches choked with mud and water. Cases of individual bravery were innumerable. Indeed the maintenance of the line was dependent more upon the staunchness, the endurance, the hard solid fighting qualities of regimental officers and men than upon skill in generalship, for which there was little scope. But where officers and men were heavily handicapped in these early battles was in material. There were not sufficient guns, there was not sufficient ammunition for what guns there were, while the bombs supplied were few and not of so effective a type as those subsequently in use.

## CHAPTER V

### OPERATIONS IN FRANCE, 1915 AND AFTER

THE Indian Corps had now for two months been holding a long strip of the line and had had to fight a formidable enemy constantly aggressive, highly skilled, and well munitioned. They had had to fight, too, under conditions the least suited to them. They had therefore fairly won a period of rest, and after the struggle at Givenchy they were withdrawn into billets in reserve.

Drafts from India filled up the ranks, but as already explained these were hardly satisfactory, and it would be idle to pretend that the fighting value of the Indian Corps in the early months of 1915 was up to the level of the force originally dispatched from India. The Corps had already had 10,000 casualties, 7,000 in Indian units, and to reconstruct shattered units while actually holding trenches and engaged in daily warfare was a task of extreme difficulty. However, about the end of February Sir John French decided to carry out a strong attack as soon as possible. He hoped to take advantage of the apparent weakening of the enemy on the British front and to surprise the Germans by a sudden attack aimed at recovering the Aubers Ridge from which we had been driven in October. That this would be of assistance to our Russian allies and would also favour the attempts which were being made by the French forces at Arras and in Champagne was clear, while what the Commander-in-Chief considered as 'perhaps the most weighty consideration of all' was 'the need of fostering the offensive spirit in the troops under my command after the trying and possibly enervating experiences which they had gone through of a severe winter in the trenches'.

Early in March the difficulties and drawbacks which the winter weather imposed upon a vigorous offensive were lessened by the drying up of the country and by spells of brighter weather. An attack was therefore planned on Neuve Chapelle with the object not only of securing that village but of capturing the salient made by the German lines at this

point, which had caused our lines opposite to be both difficult and very costly to hold through the winter months. Further it was hoped to push on and secure the high ground of the Aubers Ridge behind it, and so threaten the enemy's communication between La Bassée and Lille. The direction of the attack was put in the hands of Sir Douglas Haig, now commanding the 1st Army; and he was to be supported by troops of the 2nd Army and the general reserve. In this force was included the Indian Corps who were now holding the line west of Neuve Chapelle and south and east of Richebourg St. Vaast. For the purpose of making an intense bombardment of the enemy's position before the infantry delivered their attack, nearly 480 guns and howitzers had been massed, and at 7.30 a.m. on the 10th of March the bombardment began, timed to last for thirty-five minutes. At this early stage of the war the artillery concentration and the gunfire which followed was, on the British side, of exceptional magnitude, though far outdone by later efforts.

A few minutes after 8 a.m. the guns lifted on to Neuve Chapelle itself, and immediately the Garhwal Brigade of the Meerut Division (consisting of the 1/39th and 2/39th Garhwal Rifles, the 2nd Leicesters and the 2/3rd Gurkhas with the 3rd London Territorials in support) charged forward. The artillery fire had been most effective, wire entanglements had been destroyed, defences had been blown away, and those of the defenders who survived had been utterly stupefied and dominated by the intensity of the fire. The first objective was reached without difficulty—it was the trenches to the south of Neuve Chapelle from the road junction known as Port Arthur on the right to a point just short of Pont Logy on the left. The Dehra Dun Brigade was in support. The Bareilly held the line along the Rue du Bois and the Lahore Division was in reserve. While the 2/39th Garhwalis on the left and the 2/3rd Gurkhas and 2nd Leicesters in the centre of the Garhwal Brigade reached all their objectives, capturing many prisoners and inflicting heavy losses on the enemy, the 1/39th Garhwalis on the right unluckily bore too much to the right and came up against the German wire at a point outside the area bombarded. The wire here was practically intact, and the Germans having escaped the bombardment were ready to receive the attack with rifle and machine-gun fire. It is very

greatly to the credit of the Garhwalis that they forced their way in, despite crippling losses, and established themselves firmly in the German front line, but between them and the 2nd Leicesters on their left there was a gap where a strong German detachment held out for several hours, putting up a desperate defence. This was not finally overcome till late in the afternoon, when two companies of the 3rd Londons,<sup>1</sup> the reserve battalion of the Garhwal Brigade, and the 1st Seaforths of the Dehra Dun Brigade, made a fresh attack from front and flank. This was completely successful, nearly 150 Germans being taken and touch established with the remnants of the 1/39th Garhwalis who had clung tenaciously to the lodgement they had effected earlier in the day. Unluckily this delay and the necessity for employing the Seaforths as well as the reserves of the Garhwal Brigade had prevented the Meerut Division from pushing on against the Bois de Biez. It was not till after 4 p.m. that the Dehra Dun Brigade could deploy for its advance, and it was 5.30 p.m. before its attack started.

Meanwhile two brigades of the 8th Division had assaulted the German trenches west and north-west of Neuve Chapelle. The 23rd Brigade on the left was held up by wire entanglements which had not been sufficiently cut by the gun fire, but the 25th carried all its objectives, and pushing on into Neuve Chapelle cleared the village after sharp fighting and joined hands with the 2/3rd Gurkhas who had reached the southern end of the village about the same time as the 25th Brigade entered it from the west. Before 10 a.m. the whole village was in our hands, and this success, combined with powerful artillery support, enabled the 23rd Brigade to advance. Meanwhile the artillery completely cut off the village and the surrounding country from any German reinforcements which might have been thrown into the fight.

After the village had been securely captured we proceeded to consolidate our position, and here an unfortunate delay occurred before any further advance towards the Aubers Ridge, which was the ultimate object of the attack, was made. The infantry were somewhat disorganized from having to fight their way through intricate trenches and entanglements and

<sup>1</sup> A Territorial or Extra Reserve battalion had by this time been added to each brigade of the Indian Corps.

among the buildings of the village, and before pushing on it was necessary to get units together to some extent. More serious was it that telephonic communication had been cut by the enemy's fire, communication between front and rear was difficult, and in consequence reinforcements who might have exploited the initial success were held back till too late. The check to the 23rd Brigade had necessitated other troops leaving their assigned direction, and an adjustment of consequent confusion was required. An orchard held by the enemy north of Neuve Chapelle also threatened the flank of an advance towards the Aubers Ridge. From all these causes, and from the reserves not having been brought up in time, there was a delay which enabled the Germans to take measures to meet the threatened attack, and when at 3.30 p.m. the IVth Corps at length began to advance again, German reserves had been rushed forward and the attack was everywhere held up.

The Indian Corps at that time had the Garhwal Brigade firmly established in a line of trenches running down the eastern side of Neuve Chapelle to Port Arthur and facing the Bois de Biez, the assault on which was to form the second phase of the operations. As has been stated, the Dehra Dun Brigade under the command of Brigadier-General C. W. Jacob had hitherto been in support of the Garhwal Brigade; at 4 p.m. two of its battalions were moved up to the outskirts of the village, and at 5.30 p.m. they advanced to their objective, the Bois de Biez. It was now nearly dark, and moreover the attack came under fire from both flanks. However, the troops rapidly crossed the intervening stream, the river Layes, on portable bridges, the wood was assaulted, and the outskirts were gained and held. But here the advance was brought to a standstill, for the other assaulting brigades had been held up and information came to hand that the enemy had been reinforced and that the wood was strongly held. A retirement to the western bank of the river Layes became imperative and was effected in good order.

During the night orders were issued for a further attack on the Bois de Biez by the Meerut Division at 7 a.m. on the 11th; but when seven o'clock arrived it was found that the 8th Division was held up and could not get in line with the Dehra Dun Brigade. Nor was it found possible to make substantial progress during the entire day, for the artillery were unable to deal effectively with the various houses and defended

localities which were holding up the advance. Bad weather prevented proper aerial observation, and the telephonic communication between the artillery observers and their batteries was cut. From these two causes it was impossible to direct the artillery fire with sufficient accuracy, and although the Jullundur and Sirhind Brigades of the Lahore Division were brought forward in readiness to relieve the Dehra Dun Brigade, on the front of the Indian Corps no progress could be made and but little on that of the IVth Corps.

On the 12th the same bad weather prevailed and hampered artillery action. An attack by the Indian Corps was to be made at 11 a.m. It was to be preceded by concentrated artillery fire and was to be made in conjunction with the 8th Division by the Sirhind and Jullundur Brigades. Owing to heavy morning mists the time of assault was postponed till 1 p.m., and before it could be made the Germans had made a furious counter-attack south of Neuve Chapelle in the angle where the Rue du Bois cuts the La Bassée road. Here the Garhwal Brigade, with the Bareilly Brigade on their right, were holding the line, and they bore the brunt of the attack. At 5.20 a.m. the enemy opened a heavy bombardment and at 5.45 their infantry advanced in mass formation. As soon as they were recognized we opened a terrific and most effective fire, and the assault was brought to a complete standstill. Rarely in the war was so much damage done in a brief space. The Germans were literally mowed down wholesale, and their losses were calculated at 2,000 men. At 9 a.m. the enemy made a second attempt but fared no better.

Now at 1 p.m. the Sirhind and Jullundur Brigades moved forward. They were met by a heavy fire in front and, as the 25th Brigade was unable to advance, were also exposed to heavy enfilade firing; they could therefore make little progress. The Sirhind Brigade, which had relieved the Dehra Dun Brigade early in the morning, did indeed have some success at the start, and the Highland Light Infantry, which formed the leading battalion of this Brigade, charging across open ground, in spite of heavy casualties captured some of the enemy's advanced trenches. But as other troops had not kept pace with their advance they were exposed to fire in flank as well as in front, further progress became impossible, and all that could be done was to consolidate the ground won.

Insistent orders were later received from the 1st Army Commander to press the attack on the Bois de Biez, the Dehra Dun Brigade which had just got back to billets was recalled, and the whole Lahore Division was ordered to push on to the wood at all costs. At 5.50 p.m. our guns bombarded for fifteen minutes when a second attack was attempted. It was however smothered by the enemy's frontal and enfilade fire, and our men could not debouch from the trenches.

General Keary, commanding the Lahore Division, impressed by the urgency of his orders, was preparing for yet another assault at 10.45 p.m., preceded again by a fifteen minutes bombardment; but the operation was vetoed by Sir James Willcocks, who did not consider that an attack in pitch darkness over unknown ground and with such a large body of troops was feasible, and at 10.5 p.m. Sir Douglas Haig ordered all further operations to be suspended and positions gained to be consolidated.

Was the battle of Neuve Chapelle a success or a failure? We had not attained our ultimate object—the heights which commanded the road from Lille to La Bassée. We had been brought to a standstill just outside Neuve Chapelle and were still in the low ground. Further, we had suffered a loss of 12,811 total casualties made up of 190 officers and 2,337 other ranks killed; 359 officers and 8,174 other ranks wounded; and 23 officers and 1,728 other ranks missing, of which total the losses of the Indian Corps amounted to 4,233, made up as follows:

	<i>British Officers.</i>	<i>Indian Officers.</i>	<i>Other Ranks (British).</i>	<i>Other Ranks (Indian).</i>
Killed . . .	41	22	364	408
Wounded . . .	91	36	1,461	1,495
Missing . . .	1	2	87	225
Total . . .	133	60	1,912	2,128

On the other hand we had advanced our line on a front of two miles to a depth of 1,000 yards, had recaptured the village of Neuve Chapelle, and straightened out the dangerous salient which had caused us so much loss and trouble during the winter; we had inflicted on the Germans a loss of probably 16,000 men; we had shown the enemy that we were now capable on occasions of concentrating superior artillery fire; we had compelled them to draw on the adjoining army for help to withstand our

attack, and in spite of mistakes made which marred success the fighting put new heart into our troops and spoke to them of future victory.<sup>1</sup>

The next important fighting in which Indian troops took part was in the battles of Ypres, 1915, which Sir John French considered <sup>2</sup> not less grave and critical than those of 1914. On the 24th of April, 1915, two days after the first gas-attack upon the French north-east of Ypres,<sup>3</sup> the Lahore Division under Major-General Keary was moved north and on the 25th arrived at a position 4 miles north-west of Ypres. Attacks were being made by large forces of the enemy upon the British positions east of Ypres, and these attacks were being supported by a mass of heavy and field artillery. The enemy had also in barbarous disregard of the well-known usage of civilized war and in flagrant defiance of the Hague Convention employed poison gas, and poison gas of so virulent a nature that any human being brought in contact with it was first paralysed and then suffered a lingering and agonizing death. In the attack commencing on April 22nd resort was had to these poisonous gas fumes whenever the wind was favourable. The first to suffer was a French African Division, and the effect upon them was so virulent as to render the whole division practically incapable of any action at all. It was at first impossible to realize what had actually happened. The smoke and fumes hid everything from sight and hundreds of men were thrown into a comatose or dying condition. Within an hour the whole position of the French had to be abandoned, together with about fifty guns.

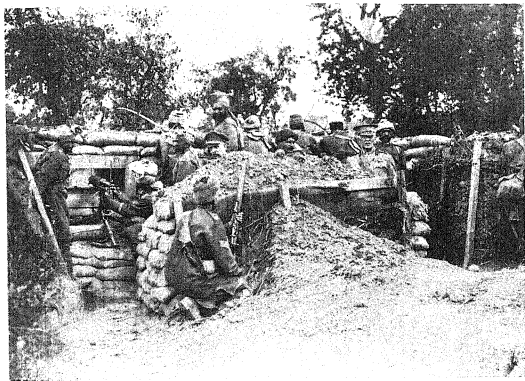
The left flank of the Canadian Division (who were on the right of the French) was thus left dangerously exposed to serious attack in flank. There was a prospect of their being overwhelmed and of the Germans attempting to cut off the British troops occupying the whole Ypres salient. The position was critical in the extreme. But in spite of the danger to which

<sup>1</sup> In the course of the battle a third V.C. was won by an Indian soldier, Rifleman Gobar Sing Negi of the 2/39th Garhwalis, who acted as bayonet man to a bombing party which pushed some way along the trenches, clearing a long stretch and killing many Germans. He led the party with great courage and dash, and, though killed later on, was awarded a posthumous V.C.

<sup>2</sup> See *The Indian Corps in France* by Lt.-Col. Merewether and Sir F. E. Smith (Murray, 1917), p. 281. The present account has been largely based on this book.

<sup>3</sup> See vol. ii, pp. 88, &c.

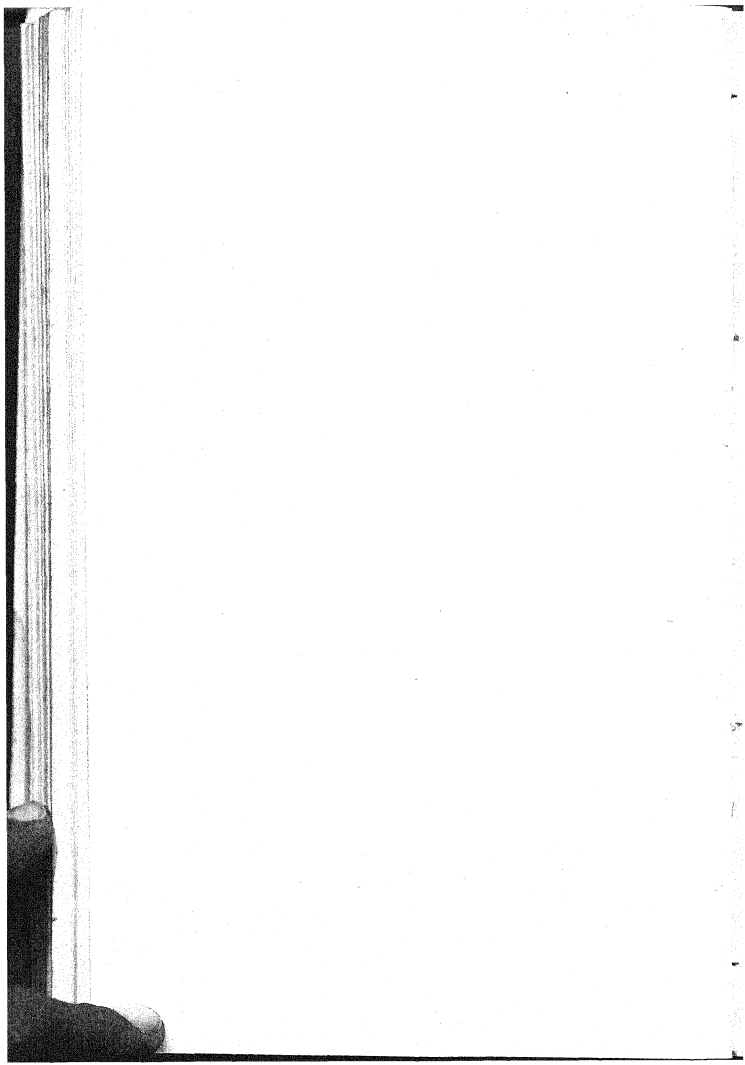




SIR JAMES WILLCOCKS in the trenches of an Indian Cavalry  
machine-gun section



58TH RIFLES PREPARED AGAINST GAS



they were exposed the Canadians held their ground with magnificent tenacity and courage, as did also the gallant 28th Division, and averted a disaster which might have had the most serious consequences.<sup>1</sup>

Supports were then hurried up, and among them the Lahore Division which was pushed up into the fighting line on the 26th of April, being placed under the orders of General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, commanding the 2nd Army. Issuing from the north-east corner of Ypres is the road to Pilkem. On the west of the road the French strongly reinforced were to attack the enemy immediately in their front. On the east of the road the Lahore Division were to attack the enemy's position about two miles north of Ypres. The division had just carried out an exhausting march and been straightway flung into the fight. The exact position of the enemy's trenches was unknown, and our artillery was unable to bombard them effectively. The attack therefore had to be made at a great disadvantage. At 12.30 p.m. the brigades moved out to take up their positions. The right of the Jullundur Brigade (whose first line was composed of the 1st Manchesters, 40th Pathans,<sup>2</sup> and 47th Sikhs) rested on a farm slightly west of Wieltje, while the Ferozepore Brigade (with a first line of the 129th Baluchis, 57th Rifles, and Connaught Rangers) continued the line to the left as far as the Ypres-Langemarck road where it touched the French. The second line, at an interval of 400 yards, was composed of the 59th Rifles and 4th Suffolks of the Jullundur Brigade and the 4th Londons and the 9th Bhopal Infantry of the Ferozepore Brigade.

At 1.20 p.m. the guns opened fire, and immediately the bombardment began the attacking troops advanced. They had to cross a long stretch of open country, the ground sloped gently upwards to a crest,<sup>3</sup> then downwards to a little stream at the bottom, then upwards again, smooth and bare, to the German position.

From the first the German artillery fired very steadily, and

<sup>1</sup> See vol. ii, pp. 88, &c.

<sup>2</sup> This battalion, which had been in China when war broke out, had just arrived in France and had been posted to the Jullundur Brigade in place of the 15th Sikhs transferred to the Sirhind Brigade.

<sup>3</sup> This was approximately the line of what was later called Buffs Road, Hill Top Farm being at the crest of the ridge.

when the crest was crossed our troops were exposed to enemy fire of every description. The difficulties of the attack were increased by confusion in our ranks. At the beginning of the advance the Jullundur Brigade on the right lost direction and bore too much to the left, crowding in on the Ferozepore Brigade and forcing it off to the left. But the troops pressed bravely on, down and up, almost to the enemy trenches, though never able actually to reach them, the farthest advance being brought to a standstill by the terrible fire about sixty yards away from the German lines. Even then they might with the supports coming up have gathered renewed momentum and carried the enemy's position, had not the Germans once again, about 2.30 p.m., had recourse to gas. Our men were wholly without protection against the fumes, and those who were not laid dead or dying on the spot fell back in confusion, some for more than a mile, before they could be rallied. A small party, however, mainly Connaughts and Manchesters, with men from several Indian units, still held on despite the gas, and though pushed back slightly by a counter-attack remained within assaulting range of the German lines until after midnight. Farther to the left Subadar Mir Dast (55th Rifles, attached 57th) greatly distinguished himself by rallying a mixed party, holding on to an advanced trench until after dark, when he retired by order, collecting various other scattered parties and bringing in many wounded. For his courage and good leadership he was awarded the V.C.

This retirement exposed the left of the line. The Sirhind Brigade was therefore brought up to La Brique. The 15th Sikhs and 1/4th Gurkhas were detached from it and assigned to the Ferozepore Brigade, and a fresh advance was made, while the remaining two battalions were held in reserve. In the event, however, after such further reconnaissance as could be made in the darkness, the attack was counter-ordered, and the Sikhs and Gurkhas dug themselves in on the line of the farm later known as Turco Farm.

On the following day, the 27th of April, the attack went forward. A bombardment began at 12.30 p.m. when the Ferozepore Brigade at once deployed for attack to get up in line with the Sirhind Brigade, the supports of which also began moving forward to reinforce the parties which had during the night relieved the advanced portions of the Jullundur Brigade.

In passing the fatal ridge by Hill Top Farm our men came under severe cross fire from rifles and machine guns both in front and on their flanks. Every exposed spot was subjected to an overwhelming volume of accurately estimated fire. Casualties were heavy, and those who did nearly reach the enemy's trenches found the wire in front untouched.

Nevertheless the commander of the 2nd Army ordered the assault to be pressed on vigorously. A new bombardment began at 5.30 p.m. from all the batteries available; and a fresh attack was started. But this also was beaten down by the enemy's fire. A French attack was also driven back by the enemy's fire and by dense clouds of gas. The position was very critical, but fortunately the Germans made no counter-attack and our troops were able to settle down and dig themselves in.

Only artillery duels took place on the 28th of April, and during the night of 29th/30th the Jullundur and Ferozepore Brigades were withdrawn after being continuously in action for three days. The Sirhind Brigade remained in position two days longer, holding itself in readiness to support French attacks that were never made and making a small advance itself on May 1st; on May 2nd it also was withdrawn, and on May 3rd the Lahore Division left in order to rejoin the Indian Corps. It had in this battle suffered a loss of killed, wounded, and missing which amounted to 3,889 out of 15,980, that is to say about a quarter of its strength. If the fine soldiers of this Division and their British and French comrades had not succeeded in recovering the ground lost on April 22nd, at any rate they had prevented the enemy from exploiting their success and capturing Ypres. The counter-attacks which had cost the Lahore Division so dearly had at least held up the Germans and prevented them from advancing at a time when a further advance of even half a mile in that restricted area would have rendered the whole position east of Ypres untenable. It was a negative success but none the less vital. The battles of Ypres, 1915, like those of 1914, had entailed the severest trials and most stubborn fighting. At the best the enemy had been checked. But that checking of the Germans at the commencement of the war and preventing them from reaching the Channel ports and cutting off England from France was what laid the foundation for eventual victory.

The Indian Corps had little but losses to show at the time. But its contribution to the victory was of a value only to be appreciated properly at the end of the war.

The next active part which the Corps had to play was in the offensive during the month of May, which had for its general object the support of the French in their offensive farther south and for its particular object the capture of the Aubers Ridge which commanded the road from Lille to La Bassée. The French were attacking towards Lens, and the British by a simultaneous attack were to draw off the German troops from opposing the French. The entire Franco-British offensive was intended to occupy German troops on the Western front and prevent their being sent to oppose the Russians in the East. But although the British offensive was undertaken chiefly in support of the French, it had also the above-mentioned distinct and important objective—that of completing what had not been completed in the Battle of Neuve Chapelle and gaining possession of the Aubers Ridge.

These operations were to be undertaken by the 1st Army under the command of Sir Douglas Haig. The Indian Corps was to attack from the line of the Rue du Bois and make for the line Ligny-le-Grand—La Cliqueterie Farm. On the right of the Indian Corps was the 1st Corps resting in Givenchy. On the left of the Indian Corps, but separated from it by a gap of some miles, was the IVth Corps which was to advance on La Cliqueterie Farm in the hope of effecting a junction with the Indian Corps well in rear of the Bois de Biez.

At 5 a.m. on the morning of the 9th of May—a fine morning—the bombardment began and lasted for forty minutes. At 5.25 a.m. the infantry who were to deliver the attack, the Dehra Dun Brigade (consisting of the 2/2nd Gurkhas on the right, the 1/4th Seaforths in the centre, and the 1st Seaforths on the left, with the 6th Jats and 1/9th Gurkhas in support) went over the parapet and into the open. It had been intended that the attacking troops should, under cover of their guns, move close up to the German lines<sup>1</sup> before making the assault, but on the first sign of a movement on our part the front was swept by rifles and machine guns from the enemy's trenches. The carnage in the leading battalions was terrible, the attack

<sup>1</sup> The left of the attack was approximately marked by the La Bassée-Estaires road.

failed, the German guns played havoc among the troops assembling in support, the attack of the 1st Division on the right of the Indian Corps was also a failure, and the IVth Corps on the left, after an initial success, was beaten back. In the afternoon of this same day another attack was organized to be carried out by the Bareilly Brigade in relief of the Dehra Dun, the 2nd Black Watch being on the right, the 58th Rifles in the centre, and the 41st Dogras on the left. The bombardment began at 3.20 p.m. and at 3.40 the troops came out for the attack. But immediately they appeared they were swept down, as their predecessors had been, by irresistible fire, and though a few men of the 41st Dogras reached some cover close to the enemy's line, they were too few to achieve anything. It was evident that neither the German defences nor the defenders in them had suffered appreciably from our artillery fire. The defences had in fact been greatly strengthened since the battle of Neuve Chapelle. Concrete had been extensively used to increase the resisting power of the parapet, while machine guns sited in pits at the base of the parapet and practically invulnerable to anything but a direct hit swept No Man's Land with a murderous grazing fire.

However, notwithstanding this disastrous repulse of May 9th, Sir John French determined to continue the offensive so as to divert German reserves from opposing the French attacks near Arras. It was decided to use the 7th Division to attack east from Festubert, and in co-operation with its advance the 2nd Division and Indian Corps were to renew the attack from the line of the Rue du Bois, being now the left of the attack instead of the right. After one postponement the new attack was launched shortly before midnight on May 15th. A continuous bombardment had been carried out throughout the day, and at 11.30 p.m. the guns lifted and the attack began, the Garhwal Brigade being the troops employed. A ditch in front of the British lines had given much trouble in the previous fighting, and bridges were now provided to enable the troops to cross. But immediately the troops attempted to advance they were met with the same murderous fire as before, the bridges became blocked, and the attack was swept away. About three hours later, at 2.45 a.m. on the 16th of May, a fresh bombardment opened preparatory to a further assault by the Garhwal Brigade, but this effort also was a failure and

it was decided to make no further attempts to advance on this front but to continue the attack due east of Festubert where more success had been achieved. On the next day, the 17th of May, the Sirhind Brigade came into the line to relieve a brigade of the 2nd Division in trenches to the right which had been captured in the course of the fighting. The relief was a matter of much difficulty owing to the condition of the battered trenches, a litter of mud and water tenanted by dead and wounded. An attack by the Sirhind Brigade on the Ferme du Bois had been fixed for the afternoon of the 18th of May. It was to coincide with an attack on another point by the Guards' Brigade. An artillery bombardment began at 2 p.m. and the assault was to be made at 4.30 p.m. But when the time came the bombing parties were held up in their own trenches by the force of the German fire, and in the face of that fire no attack could be launched.

After many hours of artillery bombardment and under cover of the guns, at 1 a.m. on the 22nd the Sirhind Brigade launched another attack on the Ferme du Bois. The ground was much broken up and in the darkness there was some confusion of units and loss of direction. On the right of the attack the 1/4th Gurkhas, led by Major H. E. Moule, suddenly found themselves up against a ditch full of water, on the further side of which was barbed wire little damaged by our bombardment. Major Moule, Captain Robinson, and a few men overcame all obstacles and reached the enemy's trench, but of the gallant party none returned. The remainder of the attack was held up.

So ended the spring offensive so far as the Indian Corps was concerned. It had been costly and had failed in its main object. But that object was beyond the capacity of the Corps, and the only satisfaction to be gained was that the sacrifices made did indirectly contribute to eventual success.

During the summer of 1915 the Indian units of the Indian Corps were thoroughly reorganized. After the heavy fighting of May which had involved the British forces in losses altogether out of proportion to the scanty gains made at Festubert, no major operations were undertaken on the British front for nearly four months. During this period the activities of the Indian Corps were confined to patrol work, leading to occasional encounters with the enemy, and the only real incidents of note



were the arrival of fresh battalions from Egypt,<sup>1</sup> to replace some of the shattered units, and a long rest out of the line, nearly a month in all, given to the Indian troops in July and August to enable them to assimilate the drafts by which they had been recently filled up. These drafts were of much better quality than those which had replaced the earlier casualties, but even so the heavy losses in British officers and the unfamiliarity of the new hands with the conditions of trench warfare and with the units to which they were drafted made this rest highly desirable.

In September active operations were resumed and the Indian Corps was called upon to take a part in the big offensive to be launched southward from the La Bassée Canal to Loos. But before the battle was fought, Sir James Willcocks had retired from the command of the Corps and his place had been taken by Lieutenant-General Sir Charles Anderson, till then commanding the Meerut Division, in command of which Brigadier-General Jacob succeeded him.

The French were at this date attacking in Champagne, and the British were to try and cut the communications between Lille and Soissons, and by attacking at various points keep the enemy in doubt where and when the main assault was to be made. The Indian Corps were now in position due north of Neuve Chapelle, immediately opposite Mauquissart and Moulin du Piètre which were held by the Germans, and for the Corps three objectives were laid down. Firstly, to attack the enemy's line between Sunken Road and Winchester Road.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, to gain the high ground between Haut Pommereau and La Cliqueterie Farm. Thirdly, from that point to continue the advance in a south-easterly direction in order to assist the main offensive in the south by turning the La Bassée defences from the north.

Very careful and elaborate arrangements were made for the attack. It was to be preceded by four days' bombardment. A mine was to be exploded under the enemy's parapet, opposite the left of our attack, gas was to be employed just before the assault, and on each flank of the assaulting troops smoke

<sup>1</sup> The 69th and 89th Punjabis came via Gallipoli, the 33rd Punjabis and 93rd Burma Infantry direct from Egypt.

<sup>2</sup> The assault was being delivered from the advanced positions secured by the IVth Corps at the battle of Neuve Chapelle.

barrages were to be formed. Lastly, field guns were to be placed so as to destroy, by point blank fire, machine guns and their emplacements.

On September 21st the bombardment began and lasted through four days and nights. In the early morning of the 25th the gas was liberated, but the wind, which had been fairly favourable, changed, and a serious disaster was only averted by the detachments in the front lines turning off the gas before it had done much damage—to our own men. At 5.45 a.m. the mine was exploded, with a noise which was heard for miles round. At 5.50 a.m. an intense bombardment began. At 6 a.m. the guns lifted and the infantry attack opened. The attack was carried out by the Garhwal Brigade on the right and the Bareilly on the left. On the right of the Garhwal Brigade were the 2/3rd Gurkhas. They advanced on a narrow front in case the wire entanglements before them had not been cut. The distance to be traversed was only 200 yards and for nearly half the way the smoke hid our men from the Germans, but as soon as they came into view they were shot down rapidly. Lieutenant Bagot Chester in command of a double company when he reached the wire found it uncut, and the supporting double company also came up against uncut wire. Lieutenant-Colonel Brakspear and Lieutenants Wood and Tyson were killed and the attack failed, only a very few men getting into the German trenches where they were quickly overwhelmed.<sup>1</sup>

The 2nd Leicesters attacking on the left of the Gurkhas had better fortune. The attack began at 6 a.m. and the lines, quickly following and well supporting each other, in ten minutes time forced their way into the German position, and some of the left-hand files pushing on farther reached the road from Mauquissart to the Duck's Bill where the survivors dug in.

A minute before the Leicesters started, the 2/8th Gurkhas on their left began their attack and the first German position was reached and taken by the leading double company without serious loss. The company then pushed forward, bearing,

<sup>1</sup> This attack gave Rifleman Kulbir Thapa the chance to win another V.C. for the Indian Corps. He was one of the few who got into the German trenches and not only got out again himself but managed to bring with him a wounded man of the Leicesters whom he had found in rear of the enemy's front line. After resewing this man Kulbir Thapa went back and brought in two wounded Gurkhas.

however, too much to the left, and took up a position on some rising ground, while patrols were sent out to establish touch with the battalions on either side. The supports then advanced and pressing on ultimately reached and occupied the German trenches immediately in front of Moulin du Piètre. But this position they were unable to retain, for the enemy counter-attacked in force and, our attack on the right having been held up, this advance party was taken in flank by the Germans. They made a resolute and stubborn resistance but by 1.30 all were killed or captured.

The next battalion on the left was the 4th Black Watch. Next to them on their left were the 69th Punjabis and on the left of the 69th Punjabis were the 2nd Black Watch, the left-hand battalion of the Brigade, on whose front 130 yards away the mine had been exploded. At 6 a.m. immediately after the explosion, the 2nd Black Watch charged with a rush and occupied the enemy's trench. Then meeting with little opposition they drove the enemy back on to his second line of trenches.

The 69th Punjabis on the left of the 4th and on the right of the 2nd Black Watch had much the same experience, bursting through the enemy's front system and reaching the front of Moulin du Piètre. The 4th Black Watch also charging at the same time took the enemy's front line with little difficulty, and eventually reached a trench about fifty yards from the Moulin du Piètre. Thus within a short time after the opening of the attack all three leading battalions of the Bareilly Brigade were established in the enemy's second line and it looked as if a substantial success had been achieved. But their losses had been heavy, and though the 33rd Punjabis in support of the 4th Black Watch advanced to the Moulin their assistance did not suffice to carry the line on. The position of the Bareilly Brigade was indeed precarious. Both its flanks were in the air, for although some 300 of the 2/8th Gurkhas had reached the second German line they were not in touch with the rest of the Garhwal Brigade. The Germans in the second line put up a stubborn fight and were soon reinforced from the rear, while their artillery kept up a steady fire, and before long counter-attacks began to develop against both flanks of the advanced party. For some time the Bareilly Brigade hung on, but its bombs ran short and efforts to replenish the supply failed. Gradually both battalions of the Black Watch and the 33rd

and 69th Punjabis were forced back. A series of stands was made and a stubborn resistance offered, but the Germans were in great force and soon after 1 p.m. the remnants of the Bareilly Brigade were back in the British trenches; the reserves of the brigade had already been absorbed into the fight and were not available to make a successful stand, otherwise the retirement might have been stopped on them and the salient at Mauquissart at any rate might have been retained.

Thus along the whole front attacked, the Indian Corps was unable to hold the positions at first taken. Probably a too rapid advance to the enemy's second line had been made and it would have been wiser to have consolidated the position won. But a continual offensive had been so strongly insisted on, that the error may be easily understood. Moreover the advanced troops naturally expected that they would be reinforced and supported from the rear. That they were not was due to congestion in the front line and communication trenches and largely the result of our own gas which prevented the advance of the Dehra Dun Brigade till it was too late to be of any avail.

It can at least be claimed that the Indian Corps carried out the role assigned to them of retaining the enemy on their front and holding large numbers of them from the main attack. Its casualties, however, had been heavy, nearly 4,000 of all ranks.

The battle of Loos was the last battle in which the Indian Corps was engaged in France. Great difficulty had been experienced in keeping the units up to strength at such a distance from their base, and it was decided to employ the Indian forces—except the cavalry—in theatres of war nearer India. Accordingly on the 10th of November the Indian Corps was relieved from the line and proceeded to embark at Marseilles. When they left France the British lines ran very much as they had found them a year earlier; if in places they had been pushed forward at others they had gone back. But if the Indian Corps had not had the satisfaction of thrusting the Germans back to the Rhine, their work in holding up the advance in 1914 had been a service of vital importance. If they had shared in no victory that could be marked on the map and had suffered terrible losses, they had nevertheless played a gallant and worthy part in the most excruciatingly

critical stage of the war. While the Canadian and Australian Forces were still in training, and the New Armies from Great Britain were being organized, the Army Corps from India was able to join with the Regulars and Territorials from England in staying the fierce onrush of the Germans; holding the position, and gaining the time for those mighty armies of 1918 which were to sweep the Germans utterly broken and defeated into their homelands once more.

But it was only the Indian infantry divisions who left France at this juncture. The two divisions of the Indian Cavalry Corps remained in France for nearly two years and a half after the departure of their comrades of the infantry. In that period the opportunities for the employment of cavalry were few and far between. 'Trench warfare' denied the mounted men all the chances which even in these days of machine guns they may still be able to snatch in a period of movement, and the role of the Indian cavalry was one of enforced waiting, varied by one or two fleeting and elusive openings and by a certain amount of employment dismounted. In the summer of 1915 the Indian Cavalry Corps had already done duty for some time as infantry, the Lucknow Cavalry Brigade being employed in the Ypres salient in June 1915 and having some sharp fighting at Hooze, in the course of which it retook the stables near Hooze Chateau and suffered over 100 casualties. Then in July the Corps moved south to the newly taken over line on the Somme and held a section of trenches opposite Thiepval for nearly two months, having close on 250 more casualties. In the winter of 1915-16 each division organized a Pioneer battalion for dismounted work and these were constantly employed, mainly to supply digging parties for work on trenches or on roads, with an occasional brush with the enemy when up in the front line. With the opening of the offensive on the Somme it seemed that the chance for real cavalry work might come, and both divisions<sup>1</sup> were held in readiness for the eagerly anticipated break through. That break through was never quite achieved, but when, on July 14th, it came nearest to being realized it was part of the 2nd Indian

<sup>1</sup> The Corps had been broken up in March 1916, the 1st Indian Cavalry Division being attached to the 3rd Army, and the 2nd to the 4th, while in June, 1916, the Meerut Cavalry Brigade returned to India en route to Mesopotamia, the 18th Lancers being transferred to the Ambala Cavalry Brigade in exchange with the 30th Lancers.

Cavalry Division that actually came into action mounted. The 7th Division, who in the morning had captured the two Bazentins and the adjacent woods, advanced in the afternoon against High Wood, and the Secunderabad Brigade moved forward on its right flank, the 20th Deccan Horse on the right, the 7th Dragoon Guards on the left. Both regiments pushed on some way, riding down a certain number of Germans hidden in the standing corn and inflicting a good many casualties on them; one charge by a squadron of the 7th Dragoon Guards resulted in the capture of over 30 Germans while another score were speared. However, machine guns from Delville Wood and from trenches East of High Wood held up the advance, many horses being hit, and in the end the brigade fell back to the line on which the infantry had halted and were consolidating. It had had 100 casualties in all.

Two months later the 19th Lancers of the Sialkot Brigade had a brisk action with some Germans. A squadron was pushing forward east of Gueudecourt, trying to exploit the success gained by the big attack of September 25th, when its patrols were held up by the Germans entrenched in a good position. The squadron had about 30 horses shot, but, finding mounted action impossible, dismounted and attacked with vigour, driving the Germans out of their position and inflicting many casualties on them. They then occupied the German position and retained it till infantry arrived to relieve them. However, the Somme offensive came to an end without a real chance for cavalry action, and the winter of 1916-17 saw the Indian horsemen once again forming Pioneer battalions and doing duty on road-making and trench-repairing. These battalions and the Divisional machine gun squadrons were kept busy enough, but theirs was not work which gave many chances of distinction. Then in the spring of 1917 came the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line, and again it seemed that the chance for the cavalry had come. Both divisions<sup>1</sup> were pushed forward on the chance of such activities, the 4th to the area north of the Ancre, the 5th to that near Peronne. But the Germans were retreating 'according to plan'; their leisurely and deliberate retirement presented a very different aspect to what might have been seen had Sir Douglas Haig's

<sup>1</sup> In October 1916 they had been renumbered as the 4th and 5th Cavalry Divisions.

original plan for 1917 been allowed to be carried out. Instead of an enemy retiring in disorder the cavalry found themselves confronted with wire and machine guns in carefully prepared positions and could do little. Both divisions had a good many casualties and nothing much to show for it, though Hodson's Horse and the 18th Lancers had some sharp fighting near Roisel and Villers Faucon. During the summer of 1917 both divisions were once more called upon to do duty in the trenches as infantry, and from May to July were holding a portion of the British front opposite the Hindenburg Line from the Omignon river northwards. They had an active time and beat off several German raids and minor attacks—the 29th Lancers distinguishing themselves by their steadiness under a heavy bombardment when in line near Cologne Farm in June and by the success with which they repulsed the attack which followed the shelling. Moreover, they made not a few successful raids of their own. The 20th Deccan Horse had a very sharp fight as they were coming back from one such raid; in No Man's Land they encountered a large party of Germans who threatened to cut them off but were dispersed by a prompt charge. Hodson's Horse also made one most successful raid, killing or taking the whole garrison of a German redoubt at a cost of three casualties. When finally relieved from this duty, which if unfamiliar was at least a break in the monotony of grooming horses and preparing for a break through which never came, the Indian Divisions were congratulated by the relieving troops on the excellent condition in which they left their trenches, and they could equally congratulate themselves on having more than held their own with the Germans opposite them.

The great 'tank attack' of November 20th at Cambrai seemed at last to have made the opening for which the cavalry had so long waited, and the 5th Cavalry Division actually pushed up to the canal between Masnières and Marcoing, hoping to get across at that point, pass east of Cambrai, and seize the passage of the Sensée near Paillencourt. But it could not even carry out the first stage in this ambitious programme; one squadron of the Secunderabad Brigade got across near Marcoing only to find the enemy still holding the Masnières-Beaurevoir line. The bridges over the canal were either broken down or under heavy and accurate fire, and it proved impossible

to get any force of cavalry over.<sup>1</sup> The next day German counter-attacks began and the division had to be withdrawn, not before portions of the Ambala Brigade had done good service in assisting to hold Noyelles against the German effort to recover it. The 4th Cavalry Division in like manner came up on November 24th, ready to exploit any success that might be gained by the attack on Bourlon Wood, but had also to retire to a back area disappointed. But the Cambrai battle was to give the Indian cavalry their hardest fight in France. When on November 30th the great German counter-stroke broke through the three weak and tired divisions which had been holding the British right since November 20th, the two Indian Cavalry Divisions were both at hand. The 4th was near Athies, actually preparing to relieve part of the 24th Division in line near Hargicourt, the 5th was at Monchy Lagache. The 5th was at once called up to Villers Faucon and ordered to attack in flank the enemy who had broken through near Villers Guislain and had occupied Gouzeaucourt. The Ambala Brigade therefore moved forwards towards Gauche Wood, which lies west of Villers Guislain and south-east of Gouzeaucourt, while the Secunderabad Brigade followed on the left. North of Peizière the Ambala Brigade got in touch with some infantry and pushing through them advanced mounted against Gauche Wood. It came under heavy machine-gun fire from south of Gouzeaucourt, and its leading regiment, the 8th Hussars, was checked. However, supported by Hodson's Horse they forged ahead, got into some enemy holding a sunken road and after a sharp fight secured this line. Advancing again from this road on foot, the brigade met a German counter-attack coming forward and, though prevented from making further progress itself, managed to bring the Germans to a standstill. Meanwhile the Secunderabad Brigade had reached Gouzeaucourt to find that that village had just been retaken by a most gallant advance by the 1st Guards Brigade, whose left was in the air north of Gouzeaucourt Station. The 7th Dragoon Guards were therefore pushed forward to cover the flank and connect up with the 20th Division, south of Villers Plouich, while patrols were sent out to reconnoitre Gonnellieu, which was found

<sup>1</sup> For the operations of the Canadian Cavalry Brigade which had replaced the Meerut Brigade in the division in the autumn of 1916 cf. vol. ii, pp. 111-12 and 219 &c.



to be too well defended by wire and machine guns for a mounted attack to stand any chance of success. Still touch was established with the 20th Division and to the right also a line was made good, connecting up with the Ambala Brigade south of Gauche Wood, while further to the right the Canadian Cavalry Brigade was pushed up towards Villers Guislain and the Lucknow Brigade from the 4th Cavalry Division was placed under the G.O.C. 5th Cavalry Division to protect the flank and connect up with infantry nearer Peizière. Thus, if Gauche Wood had not been retaken, the arrival of the 5th Cavalry Division had certainly helped materially to patch the gap in the line and save a most critical situation. The 4th Cavalry Division meanwhile, whose move had been greatly delayed by the necessity for cancelling a relief already in progress, had come up in the course of the afternoon to Villers Faucon and was in readiness to support the 5th.

But the situation was none too satisfactory: the recapture of Gauche Wood was imperative if Gonnellieu was to be retaken, and without Gonnellieu and Welsh Ridge the position of the British troops in the salient made on November 20th would be most perilous. Orders were therefore issued to the 5th Cavalry Division to attack the line Villers Guislain-Gauche Wood early on December 1st, co-operating with a fresh advance by the Guards against Gauche Wood. The Lucknow Brigade was to co-operate with the 5th Cavalry Division, the rest of the 4th to assemble in support west of Peizière. In the 5th Cavalry Division it was the Ambala Brigade which was to attack Gauche Wood, and at 7.15 a.m. the 18th Lancers and Hodson's Horse advanced dismounted to the attack, the Guards advancing on their left and a little ahead of them. This attack was a complete success. Before 8 a.m. the wood had been cleared, over 300 prisoners taken, 50 by the two Indian regiments, with three field guns and many machine guns. This was followed up by an advance of Hodson's Horse reinforced by the 7th Dragoon Guards of the Secunderabad Brigade on the left to fill a gap north-east of Gauche Wood and assist the attack of the Guards on Gonnellieu. About the same time the Lucknow Brigade had started to advance from Vaucellette Farm against Villers Guislain, but the tanks which should have co-operated with it did not appear and its advance was soon held up by machine-gun fire. Accordingly

orders were issued to the 4th Cavalry Division to put in the Mhow Brigade east of Peizière to attack Villers Guislain from the south-east, the Sialkot Brigade to support. Here also tanks should have co-operated but did not turn up. Nevertheless the Mhow Brigade moved forward mounted, 2nd Lancers on the right, Inniskillings on the left, the 38th Central India Horse supporting. The 2nd Lancers were to move over ground rather less exposed to machine-gun fire than the route assigned to the Inniskillings and were therefore to start first and to form a defensive flank and cover the advance of the other regiment. They went forward in fine style and despite machine-gun fire from Kildare Trench in their front and from both flanks they reached Kildare Trench, cleared it of Germans and opened covering fire. The Inniskillings were less fortunate; they came under heavy fire and as their leading squadron was galloping past the end of Targelle Ravine it was counter-attacked in force, most of its horses were shot down and it was surrounded and almost completely wiped out, the supporting squadron, too far behind to be able to help, having to fall back. This left the 2nd Lancers, with whom was one squadron of the Inniskillings, somewhat in the air on the left, but two squadrons of the Central India Horse managed to get forward to a position just south-west of Pigeon Ravine where they to some extent covered the flank. The Germans, however, made no attempt to counter-attack and in the meantime the Guards had made progress north of Gauche Wood and had greatly improved the position even though they had not actually retaken Gonnellieu. South of Gauche Wood there was a nasty bend in the line: the Germans were still established at Chapel Crossing and it was arranged that the Canadian Cavalry and Lucknow Brigades should attack at 3 p.m. and try to straighten out this bend. They went forward accordingly: the Canadians advanced against Chapel Crossing which they took, though pushing on beyond they were driven back by a counter-attack, while the Lucknow Brigade which aimed at reaching the beet factory on the Villers Guislain road made a little progress but could not gain their objective. Once again therefore the attacks of the cavalry had failed to do all that had been hoped, but they had at least had the effect of putting a stop to the German progress and of winning back valuable ground. It was largely due to their efforts that the highly

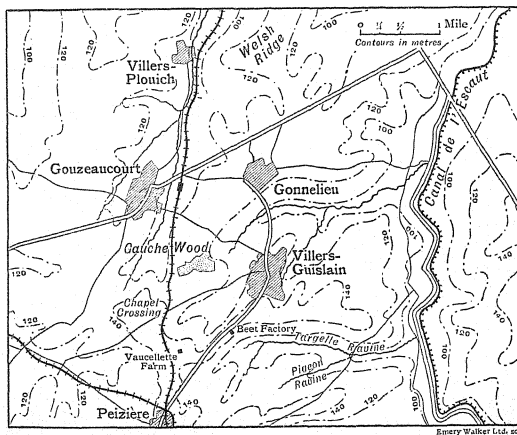
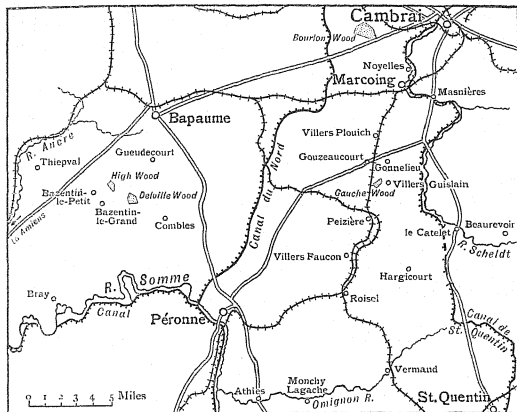
dangerous situation which had faced the British command on the morning of November 30th had been to some degree rectified and that the disaster which had threatened the 3rd Army had been averted. The fight had been a costly one, the total casualties in the two divisions came to little short of 500, but Cambrai had given the Indian cavalry a chance of showing their mettle, even if under rather unfavourable circumstances. The Guards appreciated highly the assistance given by the Indian cavalry in retaking Gauche Wood and were much impressed in particular with the dash and fighting spirit shown by the 18th Lancers and with the skill and resourcefulness of that regiment, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Corbyn, who was killed while superintending the putting of the wood into a state of defence. In token of their appreciation the 2nd Grenadiers presented the regiment with a Grenadier Bugle, the Lancers in return giving the battalion a silver statuette representing a mounted 18th Lancer.

Shortly after the end of the Cambrai fighting—the Secunderabad Brigade which had relieved the Guards in Gauche Wood had had the satisfaction of beating off a counter-attack on the night of December 1st/2nd—orders were issued for the transfer of the Indian cavalry units to Egypt. The urgent character of the ‘man-power’ situation and to a certain extent the difficulty of providing shipping for forage were the reasons for this. The Cavalry Corps was being cut down to three divisions, some units were temporarily being dismounted and used as machine gunners, and the Yeomanry whom the Indian cavalry were to relieve in the Near East were destined for a similar employment. February therefore saw the beginning of the transfer, and long before the German attack of March 21st, 1918, of which the Cambrai counter-attack had been but a foretaste, the Indian cavalry units had left the Western Front. The British regiments with whom they had been brigaded, the R.H.A., R.E., and other units attached to the Indian Cavalry Divisions, remained in France, as did the Canadian Cavalry Brigade and the staff of the 4th Cavalry Division; that of the 5th proceeded to the new theatre where the names of the 4th and 5th Cavalry Divisions were to reappear.<sup>1</sup>

The departure of the cavalry divisions did not leave India entirely unrepresented on the Western Front. Not only were

<sup>1</sup> Cf. pp. 124 and 272-3 note.

there many labour units, of which some mention has already been made, but a certain amount had been done since the autumn of 1917 in the way of substituting Indian for British personnel in Divisional Ammunition Columns and in the A.S.C., thus rendering the men relieved available for fighting purposes. Hence even in the last critical stages on the Western Front, India was contributing to the overthrow of the Central Powers, not as vitally or directly as in the great crisis of 1914, nor to the extent or importance of her contribution by relieving British troops in Palestine, but still making a tangible contribution not to be overlooked.



INDIAN CAVALRY OPERATIONS, 1917.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE NEAR EAST: EGYPT AND GALLIPOLI

TURKEY entered the war in November 1914, and on her entry we had to assume that an attack would be made upon the Suez Canal, for, whether the Turks wished it or no, it was certain that the Germans would goad them on to attack the Canal.

The Suez Canal is the main artery of the British Empire. Sever it, and the Empire would bleed to death. To secure it at all costs was essential, India had a special interest in the matter, and to ensure its safety and that of Egypt was the task originally proposed for the Lahore and Meerut Divisions. This was well before the Turks became open enemies. From the very outbreak of the war the attitude of Turkey gave rise to great anxiety in view of her close relations with Germany, and Lord Kitchener himself, having for so long served in Egypt and India, was keenly alive to the danger. At a very early stage in the war he dispatched Lieutenant-General Sir John Maxwell to command the forces in Egypt and prepare against eventualities. General Maxwell had served for more than thirty years in Egypt and knew its problems well. He had, he was well aware, to prepare to defend Egypt from attacks from other quarters than the Canal, from east and west and south, but it was from Syria that by far the most serious attack might be expected, and against it he had to make preparation well beforehand.

As has been said, originally it was intended to garrison the Canal with the Lahore and Meerut Divisions, but the urgency of the position on the French front in the autumn of 1914 necessitated their being sent on to France. The Lahore Division which had arrived in Egypt early in September made therefore but a short stay there, re-embarking on September 19th for Marseilles. It left one of its three infantry brigades, the Sirhind Brigade, behind, together with a brigade of mountain artillery who would have been specially useful in the early days of 'trench warfare' could they have proceeded to France. It was on these units of the Indian Army

that the task of guarding the Canal devolved, for shortly after the arrival of the Lahore Division the British Regulars usually stationed in Egypt were withdrawn, to take their places in the 7th, 8th, and 3rd Cavalry Divisions, the first improvised divisions to be added to the original B.E.F. In relief of these Regular units there arrived in Egypt before the end of September the 42nd (East Lancashire Territorial) Division, but the brunt of the work of protecting the Canal fell on the Indian Army, and in October orders were issued from Army Headquarters at Simla for the provision of a really considerable force of Indian troops for this purpose. On October 10th some twenty Indian infantry battalions were warned for service overseas; on October 17th Major-Generals Sir G. Younghusband, H. V. Cox, and Sir C. Melliss, V.C., were appointed to the command of three brigades, afterwards numbered 28th (Frontier Force), 29th, and 30th, which were to proceed forthwith to Egypt. Subsequently another two brigades were organized, numbered 22nd and 31st, and to them was added a third, numbered 32nd and composed in the main of Imperial Service Infantry.<sup>1</sup> At the same time the Bikaner Camel Corps and two regiments of Imperial Service Cavalry, the Mysore and Hyderabad Lancers, were ordered to Egypt. The arrival of the first instalment of these reinforcements allowed the Sirhind Brigade to proceed to France where, as has been told,<sup>2</sup> it joined the Lahore Division in the trenches near Givenchy early in December. Before the end of 1914 it was decided to organize the Indian troops in Egypt into two divisions, the 28th, 29th, and 30th Brigades forming the 10th Indian Division under Major-General A. Wilson, the 22nd, 31st, and 32nd forming the 11th Indian Division under Major-General Wallace.<sup>3</sup> These divisions were, however, far from complete; they were without any other artillery than the two batteries of mountain artillery; they had no divisional cavalry, no Sappers and Miners, and no signal companies; they could not have undertaken offensive operations for lack of transport even if their establishments had otherwise been complete. However, they supplied what was essential for the protection of the Canal, and covered by these Indian Regulars the East Lancashire Territorials and

<sup>1</sup> The units were the Alwar, Gwalior, and Patiala battalions.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 213.

<sup>3</sup> These forces had hitherto been known as I.E.F. 'F' and I.E.F. 'E' respectively.

the new levies of Australia and New Zealand, who had by this time arrived in Egypt, could concentrate upon completing their training.

The Turks, as is described in another part of this volume,<sup>1</sup> had lost little time in organizing an attempt to attack the Canal, and this was important to India because it gave not a few units of the Indian Army a chance of distinction. Towards the end of November a patrol of the Bikaner Camel Corps had drawn first blood in a sharp action against a greatly superior force of Bedouins and Turks near Bir el Nus, extricating itself skilfully from a difficult position into which a treacherous use of the white flag had entrapped it.

About the middle of January 1915 the mounted troops attached to the Canal defences began to get touch with Turks advancing in some force, and on January 26th our outposts at Qantara, held by detachments of General Cox's 29th Brigade, were engaged by the enemy whom they beat off. Further attempts to advance against this portion of our defences, none of them very seriously pressed, were disposed of with ease, and it was clear that this, like another attack on the El Kubri post on the right or Suez section of the defences, was merely a feint to conceal the real attack which was delivered against the centre of the line between Lake Timsah and the Great Bitter Lake. Here the line was held by the 22nd Brigade (62nd and 92nd Punjabis and 2/10th Gurkhas with 2nd Rajputs attached) who were supported by a Lancashire Territorial battery and by another from the Egyptian Army. Contact with the enemy was established on February 1st, and after some desultory fighting on February 2nd the Turks made their main effort on the early morning of February 3rd, pushing forward with much determination against a point 2,000 yards south of Tussum. They managed not only to reach the Canal but to launch boats and even effect a landing on the western bank. Here their success ended; the two parties who had got across were promptly counter-attacked by detachments of the 62nd Punjabis and killed or taken to a man, a few who had concealed themselves under the bank being mopped up after daybreak by the 2nd Rajputs. Moreover, when it became light the commander of the 22nd Brigade set four companies of the 2nd Rajputs and 2/10th Gurkhas in

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 51-65.



motion to clear the east bank, which resulted in the enemy retiring in large numbers from some broken ground near the Canal in which they had been sheltering. About the same time a Turkish force advanced in strength against our post at Serapeum, but was brought to a standstill by a counter-attack delivered by two companies of the 92nd Punjabis supported by parties of the 2nd Rajputs and 2/10th Gurkhas. The action here resulted in the retirement of the Turks and the capture by local counter-attacks of nearly 300 prisoners. Next morning General Wallace, who had come up with reinforcements from the 31st Brigade and taken command of the Serapeum section, ordered a move to be made to clear the east bank of the Canal, from which sniping was going on, though the main body of the Turks had disappeared. A sharp fight followed, ending in a dashing charge by the 92nd Punjabis supported by parties of the 27th and 62nd and of the 128th Pioneers, in the capture of nearly another 300 Turks, and the death of a German officer, Major von der Hagen. It was the last of the fighting; the Turks had had enough, and all along the line they were reported to be in retreat. The Imperial Service Cavalry moved out eastwards after them and picked up a certain number of prisoners, but nothing of the nature of a serious pursuit could be attempted, and the Turks were left to the painful process of a hasty retreat across the desert. Their attack on the Canal, though skilfully conducted and gallantly pressed, had been decisively defeated, and it was not likely that after such an experience it would be renewed in the near future. For want of transport and of artillery fitted for a pursuit across the desert it had been impossible to follow up the Turkish repulse by the counter-stroke in which a successful defence should culminate, but the achievement of the units of the Indian Army by whom the great bulk of the fighting had been done was of no mean strategical importance. The political situation in Egypt was very greatly improved, and the threat to the Canal had been dissipated. For the rest of 1915 there was to be no serious fighting in Egypt, though several minor affairs took place in February, March, and April in which some sharp blows were administered to the enemy. Constant patrolling was necessary, more than once the Turks attempted to lay mines in the Canal, and the work of the troops in the Canal defences was laborious and incessant. But the main

result of the action of February 3rd-4th was to render the bulk of the forces in Egypt available for service elsewhere should occasion arise.

The occasion was not slow to present itself. In March the 30th Brigade under General Melliss was detailed to proceed to Mesopotamia where reinforcements were urgently needed, and then with the opening in April 1915 of the military operations against the Dardanelles there came more calls on the garrison of Egypt. On April 26th the 29th Indian Brigade left for Gallipoli, the two Indian mountain batteries having already preceded it. When early in May the East Lancashire Territorials also left Egypt for Gallipoli the responsibility for the defence of Egypt fell more than ever on the two Indian Divisions, but the calls on them continued. Some half a dozen battalions left for France or Gallipoli to relieve tired units in those theatres of war.<sup>1</sup> In July the unsatisfactory character of the situation at Aden necessitated the dispatch thither of the 28th (Frontier Force) Brigade under Sir G. Younghusband.<sup>2</sup> Considerable claims for drafts were made by the 29th Brigade on the Gallipoli Peninsula—at one time two double companies from the Patiala Sikhs left to replenish the depleted ranks of the 14th Sikhs—and, as the total strength of the force was now down to four brigades, it was decided to amalgamate the two divisions under one command.

One reason for the failure of the Turks to renew their attacks on the Canal was that they were too hard pressed at Gallipoli and had all they could do to keep the British at bay there. To these operations the Indian Army contributed, as already stated, one infantry brigade and two batteries of mountain artillery. This brigade, the 29th, was commanded by Major-General H. V. Cox,<sup>3</sup> and on landing it consisted of the 14th Sikhs, the 69th and 89th Punjabis, and the 1/6th Gurkhas.<sup>4</sup> None of the infantry took part in the first landing, but the two batteries were brought on shore immediately after the Australians on the 25th of April 1915 and shared in the desperate

See p. 183 and notes.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 140.

<sup>3</sup> Afterwards General Sir H. Vaughan Cox, G.C.B., K.C.M.G., C.S.I. After his service in Gallipoli he commanded the 4th Australian Division in Egypt and France in 1916-17 and in 1917 was appointed Secretary to the Military Department of the India Office.

<sup>4</sup> On May 14th the two Punjabi battalions were ordered to France and were replaced from Egypt by the 1/5th and 2/10th Gurkhas.

and successful struggle to keep hold of the positions originally won.

The infantry brigade landed at Helles on May 1st at a time when the Turks were making determined counter-attacks and striving with all their might to throw their assailants back into the sea. For the moment the brigade was held in reserve, but a few days later it was attached to the famous 29th Division which was commanded by General de Lisle.

During the second great effort against Krithia of May 6th-8th the brigade was in reserve, and at the end of the battle it took over the left of the British line between Gully Ravine and the sea. Here Turkish resistance had been very stubborn, the key to the position being what was afterwards known as Gurkha Bluff. The enemy's right rested on the steep cliff north-east of 'Y' beach, and since the first landing the bluff had been converted into a powerful bastion from which the fire of machine guns had held up the left of our attacks. Two gallant attempts to establish a footing on this cliff on the 8th and 9th of May had both failed, and during the night of 10th-11th May the 1/6th Gurkhas started off to reconnoitre and if possible to seize this bluff. Their scouts descended to the sea, worked their way for some distance through the broken ground along the shore, and crawled on hands and knees up the precipitous face of the cliff. As a surprise the enterprise failed, but as a reconnaissance it proved most useful.

On the following day General Cox submitted plans for a concerted attack on this bluff, and arrangements were made with the Navy for co-operation. The arrangements were completed on the 12th May; they included effective fire on the far side of the Gully Ravine by the 89th Punjabis who had not yet left for France, a demonstration by the Manchester Brigade of the 42nd Division and by our artillery, and the support of the guns of H.M.S. *Dublin* and H.M.S. *Talbot*. At 6.30 p.m. on the 12th of May the Manchester Brigade and the artillery opened fire, and under cover of this fire a double company of the 1/6th Gurkhas once more crept along the shore and assembled below the bluff. Then, the attention of the Turks being taken up with the bombardment, they swiftly scaled the cliffs and carried the work with a rush. The machine-gun section of the Gurkhas was hurried forward, and at

4.30 a.m. a second double company was pushed up to join the first.

An hour later these two double companies extended and began to entrench. At 6 a.m. a third double company advanced across the open from their former front line of trenches under a heavy rifle and machine-gun fire, and established themselves between the main ravine on their right and the newly captured redoubt. The remaining double company moved up as a support and held the former firing-line, and at the same time a company of the 89th Punjabis pushed forward on the far side of the ravine.

Our left flank was thus advanced 500 yards, and a fine example was given of what might be done by well-thought-out and properly co-ordinated plans and by bold and skilful leadership. The commanding officer of the Gurkhas who had achieved this remarkable success was Colonel Hon. C. G. Bruce,<sup>1</sup> an officer well known in the Indian Army both for his knowledge of the Gurkhas and for his resourcefulness and dash. There were several counter-attacks during the night of the 13th/14th, and on the next night the 14th Sikhs also made a small advance, bringing up the right of the line.

For the remainder of May the Indian troops held their portion of the line with some sharp fighting of the trench warfare kind, in which both the 1/6th Gurkhas and the 14th Sikhs distinguished themselves, and on June 4th the whole Brigade took part in the general assault which was made upon the Krithia position. The object was the capture of the enemy's defences from Kereves Dere to the Aegean. The Indian Brigade was on the extreme left of the line with its flank on the sea, forming the left brigade of the 29th Division. Opening at 8 a.m. the bombardment of the Turkish position was kept up with intervals till noon, when along the whole line the infantry fixed bayonets and advanced. Unfortunately that portion of the enemy's line in front of the Indian Brigade had suffered little damage from our bombardment, and the barbed-wire obstacle was intact. The result was that, though the 14th Sikhs on the right flank pushed on well, the centre of the brigade could make no headway, and the Sikhs, exposed on both flanks and counter-attacked in force, were cut to pieces,

<sup>1</sup> General Bruce afterwards added to his distinction by leading the Mount Everest expedition of 1922.

losing two-thirds of their effectives. A company of the 1/6th Gurkhas on the left, skilfully led along the cliffs by its commander, actually forced its way into a Turkish work, but the failure of the rest of the brigade threatened isolation and it was as skilfully withdrawn under fire.<sup>1</sup>

Elsewhere along the line a considerable advance had been made at first, but the Turks by a counter-attack had forced the French and ourselves to retire from much of the ground we had won, and though some gains of ground were retained, as a whole the attack had failed to achieve its purpose.

However, despite its losses there was little rest or respite for the Indian brigade, which remained in position on the left of the British line for another five weeks. The early part of this period was marked by no outstanding incident, though minor activities were incessant and the casualty list mounted steadily. Then on June 28th came the highly successful attack by the 29th Division between Gully Ravine and the sea, and on that followed some of the hardest fighting the brigade saw on the peninsula. After the 86th and 87th Brigades had made their advance the Gurkhas pushed forward by the beach and cliffs round the Turkish flank and took over the most advanced of the captured trenches. They were promptly counter-attacked in force and for two days there was incessant fighting. Bits of the trenches were lost, regained, lost again, retaken. Time after time the Gurkhas, using bomb and kukri with great effect, drove back the Turks with much loss, and in the end after suffering extremely heavily the Turks desisted from attacking and left the disputed trenches in the keeping of Cox's brigade. But the Gurkha losses had been heavy,<sup>2</sup> and by the end of the first week of July the brigade had been fought to a standstill: nearly all the British officers were casualties, and the men, who had lost nearly 600 all told, were utterly exhausted. Relief was imperative, and on July 10th the brigade left Cape Helles for Imbros where it was to enjoy nearly a month's rest. During this time a good many drafts arrived, including, as already mentioned,<sup>3</sup> a strong detachment from the Patiala

<sup>1</sup> The total losses of the 29th Indian Brigade in this action were over 600, including 20 British officers, and the Sikhs, who had nearly 400 casualties, were reduced to 3 British officers and 200 Indian officers and men.

<sup>2</sup> The 14th Sikhs, as was natural after their losses of June 4th, played only a minor part in this fighting.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 246.

Imperial Service Infantry for the 14th Sikhs, and the beginning of August found the brigade pretty well up to strength, though the majority of the newly arrived officers came from other units and were strangers to the men under them, a heavy handicap to an Indian unit.

To the Indian brigade, thus rested and brought up to strength, was now to fall their culminating experience in the great Gallipoli venture. Sir Ian Hamilton was to make his supreme effort to cut off the Turkish Army from communication with Constantinople and win a passage for the British Fleet up the Dardanelles, and to the Indian brigade was allotted the honourable task of assaulting the actual summit of the ridge—the Sari Bair Ridge—which dominated the peninsula at its vital point.

Attacks were to be made at Helles and at Suvla Bay. But these were to be complementary operations. The attack by the Australians and New Zealanders from Anzac was to be, in Sir Ian's words, 'the knock-down blow'; and to these troops the Indian brigade and an Indian mountain battery were attached. The whole were to be under the command of General Sir William Birdwood, an officer of the Indian Army who had been taken by Lord Kitchener from India to command the Australians and New Zealanders.

The troops under Birdwood's direct command amounted in round numbers to about 35,000 rifles and 72 guns, with naval support from two cruisers, four monitors, and two destroyers. The attack was to be made on the night of the 6th/7th August, by which date reinforcements from England for the other attacks would have arrived and by which date also the moon would be low. On the nights of the 4th/5th and 5th/6th August reinforcements were shipped into Anzac very silently in the darkest hours, and tucked away in their prepared hiding-places out of sight from aeroplanes or observers. Immense efforts had been made to accumulate food, drink, and munitions of war. The provision of water was an especially difficult problem. On the crests of the ridges to be scaled no water at all would be found. The season was the hottest and driest and the assaulting troops must inevitably suffer from thirst. Accommodation had also to be provided for the reinforcing troops in concealed bivouacs. All these preparations were completed, and on the appointed date the attack from

Anzac began and simultaneously the IXth Corps began its disembarkation at Suvla Bay.

The role assigned to Anzac was to storm the Sari Bair Ridge. The 29th Indian Infantry Brigade were, with the 4th Australian Infantry Brigade, the 21st (Kohat) Indian Mountain Battery and one company of New Zealand Engineers, to form the left assaulting column under the command of Major-General H. V. Cox. They were to work up the Aghyl Dere (a ravine about 2 miles to the north of Anzac Cove) and to assault Hill 305 (Koja Chemen Tepe) the highest point of the whole Sari Bair Ridge.

On the night of the 6th August this left assaulting column made its way along the foot-hills of Ocean Beach and entered the Aghyl Dere Ravine in the early hours of the 7th. The surprise on this side was complete; the enemy's arms and ammunition were scattered in every direction. But the darkness of the night, the density of the scrub, the difficulties of scrambling about precipitous hill-sides made progress slow and caused much exhaustion to the troops, who found themselves at daybreak some way short of the points they had hoped to reach. After advancing some distance up the Aghyl Dere the column had divided, the 1/5th and 2/10th Gurkhas pushing up a long spur which ran down into the south branch of the Aghyl Dere from a point on the west known as 'Q', while the rest held on for 305. The 4th Australian Brigade struggled, fighting hard as they went, up the north fork of the Aghyl Dere. Unfortunately the guide to the column had lost his bearings, and in consequence mistakes were made both as to the positions reached and as to the points attacked.

It was about 4 a.m. when the 1/5th and 2/10th Gurkhas diverged from the main column and began pushing up the spurs leading to Hill Q. They soon encountered serious resistance but steadily gained ground, while on their left the 1/6th Gurkhas followed by the 14th Sikhs began to climb another intermediate spur. They, too, were stoutly opposed, and by 7 a.m. the report came back to brigade head-quarters that the 1/5th Gurkhas were hung up on a subsidiary spur, unable to get on in face of the fire coming from the enemy on the top of the main ridge. On their left were some of the 2/10th Gurkhas and of the 14th Sikhs mixed up with the 4th Australian Brigade, to their right more of the 2/10th

Gurkhas and the 1/6th Gurkhas, who had got over to this flank, while a few 1/5th Gurkhas had climbed up the main Chunuk Bair Ridge but had got too far to the south and were near the Farm, one of the few well-marked points in the blind and difficult tangle of spurs and ravines. Here too the advance had been brought to a standstill by the heavy fire poured into it from the crest of the ridge. The delay in the advance had allowed the Turks to bring up their reserves and the opposition had hardened. The attack of our right assaulting column had also, by 9 a.m., been checked, and any further advance on Koja Chemen Tepe had to be, for the moment, suspended. The 4th Australian Brigade also had been checked and had failed to reach its objective.

However, the New Zealanders were not to be checked, and at 9.30 a.m. they again pressed forward whilst our guns pounded the enemy moving along Battleship Hill. But their efforts were without avail. The enemy were gathering in strength and the men were exhausted. They managed to secure the ground known as Rhododendron Ridge just below the crest of Chunuk Bair, and here most of the 2/10th Gurkhas were able to join them, but the utmost the troops could do was to cling to what they had captured and make ready for the night. The help they had looked for from the Suvla Bay attack was not forthcoming.

The hope and intention of reaching the all-important summit had, however, by no means been abandoned. During the afternoon of the 7th August a reconnaissance of Sari Bair was carried out, and the troops were organized for a fresh advance in three columns to take place early on the morning of the 8th. The right column,<sup>1</sup> under Brigadier-General F. E. Johnston, was to climb up the Chunuk Bair Ridge. The left column (which with the centre column was commanded by Major-General Cox) was to make for the prolongation of the ridge north-east to Koja Chemen Tepe. In this new attack the 2/10th Gurkhas, followed by two battalions of the 39th Brigade, were to advance up a spur which ran just north of the Farm; the 1/6th were to head another column directed against Point 'Q', while farther to the left the 1/5th and

<sup>1</sup> The 26th Indian Mountain Battery accompanied the right column and did good service in spite of the greatest difficulties. The 21st Indian Mountain Battery was with General Cox.



the 14th Sikhs were to make for a point on the crest just east of 'Q', keeping touch with the 4th Australian Brigade which was again attacking Abd er Rahman Bair.

The attack was timed for 4.15 a.m. The right column, the Wellington Battalion of the New Zealand Brigade supported by the 7th Gloucesters, mounted the slopes of Chunuk Bair, and though suffering fearful losses attained and kept the summit. In the centre hardly enough time had been allowed for the troops to reach their assaulting positions: the darkness and the ground had caused great delays and only the 1/6th Gurkhas were in place at 4.15. But when the success of the Wellingtons and 7th Gloucesters was realized the centre columns did their best to get forward. They came under a deadly fire from the upper slopes of Chunuk Bair, lost heavily, and were unable to gain the ridge. The 14th Sikhs, indeed, were heavily counter-attacked, apparently by part of the counter-stroke which thrust the 4th Australian Brigade back to its starting-line, and once again the attack was checked, leaving the 2/10th and 1/6th Gurkhas mixed up with the 39th Brigade about level with the Farm, the 1/5th Gurkhas farther north, and the 14th Sikhs beyond them facing more to their left towards the heights beyond the Asmak Dere.

In the afternoon the battle slackened, and plans were made for yet another grand attack, when full use would be made of the advantage we had gained by the capture of Chunuk Bair, where the Wellingtons and 7th Gloucesters had managed to retain their hard-won footing. The main attack was to be delivered by five fresh battalions under General Baldwin which were to move up to Rhododendron Spur and attack 'Q'. In this attack the 1/6th and 2/10th Gurkhas were to co-operate; they were to advance on Baldwin's left and were to push forward as far as they could under cover of the bombardment and assault directly the guns lifted. The 1/5th Gurkhas and 14th Sikhs were merely to assist by demonstrations.

At 4.30 a.m. on the 9th of August the Chunuk Bair Ridge and Hill Q were heavily shelled. Naval guns and guns from the left and right flank took part in this bombardment which rose to a climax at 5.15 a.m., when it was to lift and play on the slopes. Unfortunately the column under General Baldwin

lost its way in the darkness and at 5.15 three of his battalions were still in the Aghyl Dere and one was only half-way up the slope to the Farm. However, the 1/6th Gurkhas, under Major C. G. L. Allanson, supported by the 6th South Lancashires, had crept forward during the bombardment as ordered, and pushing rapidly up the slopes of the col between Chunuk Bair and Hill Q, carried the position, drove the Turks from their trenches, and saw beneath them some 5 miles distant the waters of the Dardanelles. Not only did they reach the crest but with some of the 6th South Lancashire Regiment they began to attack down the far side of it, firing as they went at the fast-retreating enemy.

But now, just as victory seemed assured, a turn came. At the critical moment the British artillery re-opened fire, and a salvo bursting among the Gurkhas and South Lancashires checked their advance. Immediately the Turks rallied to a counter-attack. Heavy fire from Abd-er-Rahman Bair swept the ridge. Gurkhas and Lancashire men, exhausted by their exertions and want of rest, were forced backwards over the crest and to the lower slopes whence they had first started. Here they were rallied mainly by the exertions of Captain Phipson, the Medical Officer of the Gurkhas, the only British officer left with the battalion.

That evening—the 9th August—our line ran along Rhododendron Spur up to the crest of Chunuk Bair, where about 200 yards were occupied and held by some 800 men. From Chunuk Bair the line ran down to the Farm and almost due north to the Asmak Dere southern watershed, whence it continued westward to the sea near Asmak Kuyu. The 1/5th Gurkhas were still in position on the left of the line with the 1/6th near the Farm; the 14th Sikhs had been withdrawn to reserve and the 2/10th Gurkhas should have moved to the left to reinforce the troops holding Damakjelik Bair, but they had drifted away to the right and were all mixed up with the 13th Division troops round the Farm. At daybreak on the 10th of August the Turks delivered a grand attack, swept over the crest of the Chunuk Bair, and simply overwhelmed the defenders. They attempted to come down the western slopes, but now in their turn they were swept away by our terrific gun and machine-gun fire. At the same time the enemy hurled strong forces against our line farther north, and a desperate

battle here took place.<sup>1</sup> The loss of the advanced position on Chunuk Bair left the 1/6th Gurkhas, with whom were parties of the 2/10th and of the 9th Royal Warwickshires, in a most awkward situation. The ridge here was horse-shoe shaped and the troops were under a converging fire from three sides, while the Turks began to advance down the hill and to threaten to surround the advanced posts held by the Gurkhas. For some time they held on, but the position was untenable and almost impossible to reinforce, and eventually the survivors were forced out of it and driven some way down the hill. But the Turks could not press their advantage, they could not even re-occupy the Farm, and in the end a line was taken up along the lower slopes of Chunuk Bair and held by the 13th Division, the units of the 29th Indian Brigade being taken out, except the 1/5th Gurkhas who remained in their position on the left until the evening of August 12th.

Exhausted and reduced in numbers as the brigade was—its casualties came to nearly a thousand—it was not to get any real relief, for it had to be transferred to the left of the line to connect up the Damakjelik Bair position with the right of the IXth Corps which was near Kazlar Chair. The line here was not very satisfactory, and it was decided to make an attack on the high ground known as Kaiajik Aghala just across the Kaiajik Dere. This was to combine with the renewed attack to be made by the IXth Corps on the Anafarta Hills. One important point to be secured was the Kabak Kuyu Wells, just north of the main tactical feature of the Kaiajik Ridge, the so-called Hill 60. These wells provided an excellent supply of water, and their acquisition would go far to improve the situation in this essential respect. In the attack, delivered on August 21st, the Indian Brigade advanced across the flats from the line Damakjelik Bair-Kazlar Chair, while the 5th Connaught Rangers delivered the actual attack on Kabak Kuyu and some Australians and New Zealanders assaulted Hill 60. The Indian units carried out their task accurately and successfully, took and made good the line ordered, linked up with the Connaught Rangers at the wells and established touch on the left with the IXth Corps just beyond Susuk Kuyu. The operation cost nearly another 200 casualties, the 1/5th and

<sup>1</sup> The New Zealand account of this August fighting does full justice to the Indian troops. See vol. iii, pp. 302-3.

2/10th Gurkhas having 60 and 70 respectively, but the ground gained was most useful and a few nights later the 1/5th Gurkhas shortened the line to be held by pushing forward at night and digging in on a new alinement. It was the last offensive operation of the brigade at the Dardanelles. Many weary weeks of trench warfare were before them, many casualties, much sickness, a monotonous and inactive period. At the end of August the brigade was reinforced by the 1/4th Gurkhas withdrawn from France and nearly 1,000 strong, a welcome reinforcement to its depleted ranks, but this fine battalion was not to be given a chance to add to its laurels at the Dardanelles. Shortly before the main evacuation the 29th Indian Brigade left for Egypt, whence the majority of its units returned to India early in 1916.

The Indian troops left the Gallipoli Peninsula without having had the satisfaction of having taken part in any great victory, though they had scored more than one minor local success. Indeed, the whole British effort had failed in its object of breaking through the Turkish position, freeing the Dardanelles, opening the way to Constantinople, and joining hands with the Russians. The Indians, like the other units who fought in Gallipoli, could console themselves with the thought that they had contributed to the containing and breaking of the flower of the Turkish Army, and so made possible the subsequent victories of Maude and Allenby in Mesopotamia and Syria. It was a curious coincidence that the Indian Brigade should have borne the same number as that of the famous division of British Regulars whose name will always be associated with Gallipoli and by whose side it fought so long. The British Army will always be proud of the achievements of the 29th Division, but the Indian Army may well remember Cox's 29th Indian Brigade with pride; indeed, were they to claim that had a larger Indian contingent been spared from Egypt to be behind the 29th Division on April 25th and 26th, the eventual upshot of the enterprise would have been very different, the suggestion will not be lightly set aside.

As long as the Gallipoli campaign absorbed the attention and energies of the Turkish higher command, Egypt had, as already mentioned, been free from any menace from the eastward. The Indian units who spent the summer of 1915 in Egypt had therefore an uneventful time. The Bikaner Camel

Corps found themselves well occupied with patrol work in Sinai and had several brushes with Bedouins, but the other Indian troops hardly came into contact with any enemy. In November, when the Lahore and Meerut Divisions appeared in the Canal on their way to Mesopotamia, the opportunity was taken to make a good many changes in their composition, substituting fresh or rested battalions for several which had been all through the campaigns in France.<sup>1</sup> Shortly afterwards the arrival in Egypt of the forces employed in Gallipoli did away with the necessity for retaining in Egypt so large an Indian contingent. India had done her part in safeguarding the Canal; she could now put forward an urgent claim for her troops nearer home, for the situation in Mesopotamia was critical and reinforcements were badly needed for the relief of Kut. Accordingly early in 1916 the majority of the Indian units left Egypt, most of them for India, though two, the 40th Pathans and 129th Baluchis, who were followed in July by the 57th Rifles, went to East Africa, in which theatre of war the frontier and trans-frontier tribesmen of whom they were in large measure composed would not be subjected to the peculiar temptations and strains to which service in Mesopotamia would have exposed them, while the 69th Punjabis were sent to Aden. Thus by May 1916 the Indian contingent in Egypt was reduced to four Regular battalions,<sup>2</sup> along with the Imperial Service units originally sent to Egypt in 1914. The organization of this force as the 10th Indian Division had been abolished in March, as so small a contingent did not require a divisional staff, and the 20th (Imperial Service) and 29th Indian Infantry Brigades were attached to the 42nd Division in the Suez section of the Canal defences. The total Indian contingent in Egypt in the latter half of 1916 thus sank to about 8,000 fighting men.

But before this date one of the Indian units in Egypt had seen some sharp fighting and had greatly distinguished itself against a new enemy. The story of the development of trouble

<sup>1</sup> Thus the 6th Jats, 9th Bhopals, 41st Dogras, and 125th Rifles, all original units of the Indian Army Corps, rejoined it while the 2nd Rajputs, 3rd Brahmans and 92nd Punjabis and the 51st and 53rd Sikhs and 56th Rifles of General Young-husband's Frontier Force Brigade, which had returned from Aden, were transferred to it, the ten battalions thus relieved being for the time posted to the 10th Indian Division.

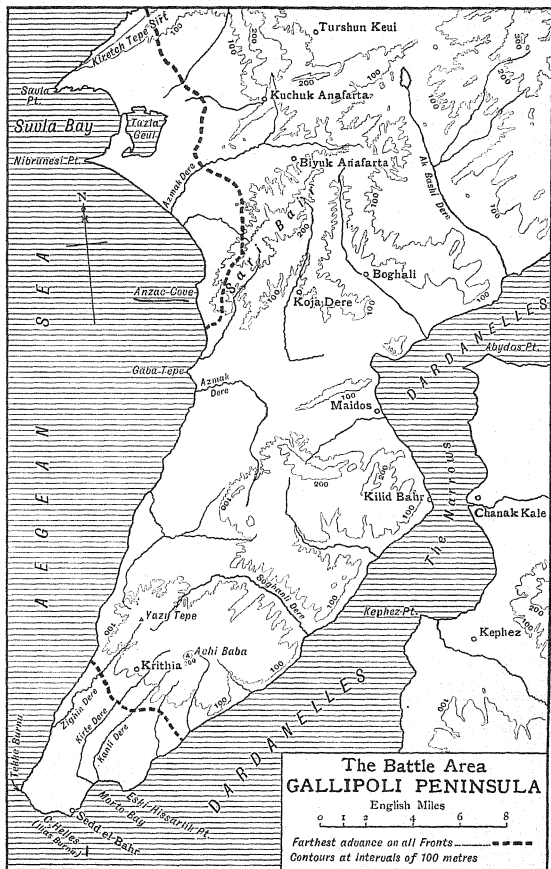
<sup>2</sup> The 1/23rd Pioneers, 57th and 58th Rifles and 2/3rd Gurkhas.

with the Senussi is described in another part of this volume.<sup>1</sup> It was a danger all the more serious because when it became necessary to organize a force to deal with it, with all the thousands of troops in Egypt at that time there were very few units capable of taking the field, the vast majority being drafts, depots, convalescents and hospital patients, administrative units and other details belonging to units at the Dardanelles. With some difficulty a force was assembled at Alexandria in November 1915, consisting of a composite mounted brigade and an infantry brigade in which were included the 15th Sikhs who, after distinguishing themselves in France, had been transferred to Egypt in June. A detachment of the Bikaner Camel Corps also formed part of the force.

The first step in the campaign against the Senussi was the dispatch by sea of the 15th Sikhs under Lieutenant-Colonel J. L. R. Gordon to secure the harbour of Mersa Matruh where the force was to concentrate. This done, after some preliminary reconnaissances which involved some sharp fighting, an advance in force was made on December 25th and the enemy were brought to action at Gebel Medwa.<sup>2</sup> The brunt of this action fell on the 15th Sikhs, who carried out the main attack against the left of the Senussi position and displayed the greatest dash and resolution, overcoming a really serious opposition. They were admirably led by Colonel Gordon and well supported by the New Zealanders, and the action resulted in a severe defeat of the enemy, who lost heavily and had to retire some distance. A month later the advance was renewed, a battalion of the South African Infantry Brigade having been added to the column under Colonel Gordon which included the Sikhs and New Zealanders. A second action on January 23rd was even more stubbornly contested than the earlier fight; the Sikhs, who led the main attack, had to advance over ground devoid of cover against strong positions defended by a vigorous and numerous enemy, who counter-attacked repeatedly and more than once threatened to outflank the attacking line. In the end, however, the discipline, resolution, and gallantry of the attackers prevailed, the enemy's positions were carried, his camp taken and burnt, and heavy losses inflicted upon him.

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 66-72.

<sup>2</sup> A battalion of the New Zealand Rifle Brigade and a composite regiment of Australian Light Horse were also included in the column. See above, p. 68.



But the British casualties had been serious, over 300 in all ; and those of the Sikhs, nearly 140 killed and wounded, testify to the prominent part which India's contingent had played in this engagement. In the third and final defeat of the Senussi the Sikhs had no share—they had been ordered back to India and their absence was severely felt—but India had still her representative in the ' Western Frontier Force ', as two sections of the Hong Kong and Singapore Mountain Battery<sup>1</sup> were present in the closing stages of the operations.

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 451.



## CHAPTER VII

### THE NEAR EAST: SINAI AND PALESTINE

WITH the spring of 1916 came a new phase in the operations in the Near East. We had been for more than a year on the defensive in Egypt. The time was now at hand for a more active role. It has been seen that early in 1916 General Sir Archibald Murray took over the command of the forces in Egypt and that he set himself energetically to organize an offensive. The capture of Erzerum by the Russians in February, the heavy Turkish losses in Gallipoli, and the calls of Mesopotamia had considerably relieved the pressure on Egypt. The time had now come when the enemy might be attacked by a movement from Qantara towards El 'Arish, and the well-watered zone radiating 15 miles east and south-east of Qatiya might be permanently occupied. At the beginning of August the enemy, as has already been told, attempted to forestall our forward movement by attacking our positions near Rumani, but he was driven off with a loss of 9,000 men including 4,000 prisoners;<sup>1</sup> and in the autumn of 1916 preparations were made to advance from Qatiya upon El 'Arish. The enemy however, retired, and on the 21st of December 1916 we occupied El 'Arish. From there the Australian Light Horse and Camelry pushed rapidly on, and before the enemy could reinforce it seized Rafah, an important point which, when the railway was laid up to it, we were able to convert into an advanced base from which an attack on the Turkish position in Palestine could be launched.

Here, however, the main resistance of the Turks was met. Some 20 miles beyond Rafah is Gaza, and Gaza, standing as it does at the gateway into Palestine, had been converted into a fortress of the first class, surrounded by earthworks among the sand-dunes lying between the town and the coast and by works on the heights behind it. All these defences were heavily wired in, and defences had been constructed along all the

<sup>1</sup> None of the Indian units then in Egypt took part in the Rumani operations, as they were nearly all in the Southern section of the Canal defences nearer Suez.

line extending as far as Beersheba about 30 miles from the sea. In addition Gaza and Beersheba had been connected up by an excellent motor road, while in front of the hills on which the defences were constructed ran a ravine, adding greatly to the strength of the whole position.

For the attack of so strong a position ample preparation was needed. But sufficient time for preparation was not available because the attack had to be hastened in order to support Maude's operations in Mesopotamia. Gaza was assaulted and its outskirts momentarily penetrated. But the Turks by a counter-thrust at our line of communications forced our troops to retire to their former line. A second attempt on Gaza in the following month met with no better success, despite even harder fighting and heavier losses.

General Allenby succeeded to the command in Egypt in June 1917, and at once began to prepare for a renewal of the attack on the Turks. His preparations were long and careful, and he was, moreover, fortunate in being able to obtain the reinforcements which had been denied to his predecessor. These mainly came from Salonika, from which two divisions and a Yeomanry brigade were withdrawn, but India also contributed a share. In September 1916 the 101st Grenadiers after long service in East Africa had been transferred to Egypt, and a second battalion had been formed out of the large reinforcements which had been dispatched to it from India. The same course was taken in the case of the 23rd Pioneers and the 2/3rd Gurkhas, and with the arrival of the 123rd Outram's Rifles from India in January 1917 the nucleus was provided for another division, though at first the extra Indian units were formed into a 49th Brigade and employed either at Suez or on the lines of communication in Sinai. But in the course of the summer there arrived in Egypt from India several Territorial battalions of the 2nd Wessex Division who had been sent to India at the end of 1914, and out of these and the 29th Indian Brigade a new division was formed. This division, numbered the 75th, came into existence officially in June 1917 and took over part of the front line opposite Gaza in July. It continued in this quarter until General Allenby's great offensive began, and it was just before the capture of Gaza that Indian units came into action for the first time in the Palestine campaign. This was on November 1st, when the

3/3rd Gurkhas made a most successful raid on the Gaza defences, killing or taking over 30 Turks with trifling casualties. The episode is of the more importance because this was the first serious engagement of any of the newly formed Indian battalions which were to figure so prominently in the later stages of the Palestine operations, the 'Service battalions of the Indian Army' they may almost be called. In the official report of the raid, attention was drawn to the promise displayed by this young battalion, a promise to be well maintained in later actions, and it is worth noting that the raid commander, Major Bagot Chester, was the officer who had so distinguished himself at Mauquissart in September 1915 in the last action fought by the parent battalion, the 2/3rd Gurkhas, in France.<sup>1</sup>

General Allenby decided to strike his chief blow against Hareira and Sheri'a—and as a preliminary to capture Beersheba. Success here offered prospects of pursuing his advantage and forcing the enemy to abandon the rest of his fortified positions. But in order to keep the enemy in the dark as to his real intentions Allenby organized an attack on Gaza also.

The chief difficulties he had in carrying out his contemplated move against Beersheba were in regard to water and transport. Arrangements had to be made to ensure that the troops would be kept supplied with water while operating at considerable distances from their original water base for a period which might amount to a week or more. There were no good roads south of the line Gaza-Beersheba, so no reliance could be placed on the use of motor transport; and practically the whole of the transport available for the force, including 30,000 camels, had to be allotted to the one portion of the force destined to strike at Beersheba in order to enable it to be kept supplied with food, water, and ammunition at a distance of 15 to 21 miles in advance of rail-head.

The date for attack on Beersheba was fixed for the 31st of October 1917. But on the 27th we commenced a bombardment of the Gaza defences, and on the 30th British and French warships joined in this bombardment. On the evening of the 30th the portion of the eastern force which was to make the attack on Beersheba was concentrated in positions of readiness for the night march to its positions of deployment. The night march was successfully carried out. The mounted troops

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 230.

arrived early in the morning at a point 5 miles east of Beersheba. A force was sent from there to cut the communications to the north, while the artillery broke down the wire entanglement of the town's defences. An assault was made at 12.15 p.m. on the works to the south-east of the town. It was successful all along the line, and by 6 p.m. all the works were in our hands. The works to the north were similarly attacked and occupied by 7.30 p.m. Meanwhile the Australian Light Horse rode straight at the town from the east, galloping over two deep trenches and entering the town at 7 p.m. The Turks had been taken completely by surprise, and a very strong and extremely important position had been captured with slight loss. The left flank of the main Turkish position lay open for a decisive blow.

But the enemy's attention had still to be directed to Gaza. An attack on Gaza was therefore planned to take place before the advance from Beersheba should be made, so as to draw the enemy's reserves in the Gaza direction. The attack on the outer defences of Gaza began on the 2nd of November. It was successful in capturing most of its objectives, and it not only prevented any units being drawn from the Gaza defences to meet the threat to the Turkish left flank, but drew to Gaza some of the enemy's reserves. On the 6th of November Allenby delivered his main blow. The enemy tried to draw him off north of Beersheba, but he steadfastly kept to his settled intention of attacking Sheri'a. The attack proved completely successful. The enemy was driven from a series of very strong works. Before dark Sheri'a station was captured, and mounted troops were sent in pursuit of the enemy to the north.

All this time the bombardment of Gaza had continued, and another attack was planned for the night of the 6th/7th. But the Turks had already begun to evacuate the town, and during the 7th it came completely into our hands.

The capture of Gaza was important enough, but it was only the beginning of Allenby's attack upon the Turkish forces. He gave the enemy no rest, but pursued them steadily northward. Difficulties in regard to water and forage necessarily hindered his progress, and the enemy's resistance stiffened as he advanced. But he made persistently for Junction Station, where the railway to Jerusalem branches off into the

Judean Hills, aiming by its capture to cut the Turkish forces in half. It was in this pursuit that the Indian units in the 75th Division got their chance of distinction. Two of its brigades had taken part in clearing Gaza, on November 9th it started on in advance up the coastal plain, and on November 11th it was in touch with the enemy near Beit Duras, which lies south-east of Esdud, the Ashdod of the Philistines. The Turks were showing signs of an attempt to rally, evidently hoping to cover the lateral line of communications along the railway from Lydda to Jerusalem. It was all important to strike them hard and promptly before they could form a strong defensive front, and so, despite transport difficulties which made rations scarce and conditions most uncomfortable, the 52nd (Lowland) Division, who were leading Allenby's infantry, attacked on November 12th and took the village of Burqa. The capture of Burqa forced the Turks back on their last line of defence, which ran from north-west to south-east in front of Junction Station. But the key to Burqa was a hill a mile to the east, called Brown Hill, and the Scottish battalion which assailed this point had the stiffest of fights to secure it. They had been driven off by a counter-attack and were preparing for yet another assault when the 2/3rd Gurkhas came up on their right, for the 75th Division was moving up on the right rear of the 52nd preparatory to the attack on the main position next day. In response to a request for help from the colonel of the 4th Royal Scots two companies of Gurkhas at once pushed forward and joined in with the remnant of the Scots. The assault was a complete success : Scots and Gurkhas went forward all together, swept the enemy off the crest, killed and took many, and secured the all-important position.

The success achieved on November 12th allowed of an attack next day on the main position in front of Junction Station ; it was strong, but the pace of Allenby's pursuit had not given the Turks time to develop it fully. In this attack the 75th Division was on the right of the 52nd, beyond whose left flank were Yeomanry. The Turks put up a stout fight, but the attack of the 75th Division was vigorously pressed, the two Gurkha battalions being well to the fore. Tel el Turmus, El Qastine, and Yazur were promptly taken, and then, pushing on, the division secured a second ridge between El Mesmiyeh and

Qatra, beat off a counter-attack, and took many prisoners. Elsewhere, too, the attack had gone well. The 52nd (Lowland) Division took the strongly held villages of Qatra and El Mughaiyir, being materially assisted by a most dashing mounted charge of Yeomanry across the plain under heavy fire, and by the evening the enemy were in retreat. On the 14th we occupied the station and the enemy's army was thus broken into two separate parts, which retired north and east respectively in small scattered groups. A strategic move of the first importance had been successfully accomplished.

In fifteen days Allenby had advanced his forces 60 miles on his right and about 40 on his left. He had driven a Turkish Army of 9 infantry divisions and 1 cavalry division out of a position in which it had been entrenched for six months, and, pursuing it, had inflicted on it losses amounting in all to a total of nearly two-thirds of its original effectives. Over 9,000 prisoners, about 80 guns, over 100 machine guns, and quantities of ammunition and stores had been captured.<sup>1</sup>

Having split the enemy in two, Allenby gave him little rest; he first pressed on up the coastal plain by Ramle and Lydda, and on the 16th of November occupied Jaffa. Meanwhile the Yeomanry were feeling their way into the Judæan foot-hills and penetrated as far as Beit 'Ur et Tahta (Lower Bethhoron). On the line of advance to Jerusalem there was only one good road, and the country to be traversed consisted of a series of spurs, steep, bare, and stony, and in many places precipitous. Beside the main road the other roads were mere tracks, which without improvement were impracticable for wheeled traffic, and throughout these hills the water supply was scanty. Still it was all-important to strike while the iron was hot and to follow up the enemy before he could recover from his demoralization or bring down reserves from the north. Only a very few days could therefore be spent in preparation.

Protected on its flanks by mounted troops, the infantry commenced its advance on the 18th of November, the 75th Division on the right, the 52nd on the left, and on the 19th entered Latron. From thence, in order to avoid any fighting in close vicinity to the Holy City, a move northwards was made with the object of cutting the road from Jerusalem to Nablus. But the Turks were strongly entrenched on the

<sup>1</sup> For these pages see General Allenby's dispatch of 16 December, 1917.

ridges west of this road and were supported by artillery. The first attempt to reach the road was not successful. The enemy, gathering reinforcements, counter-attacked in force, and the Yeomanry who were on the left flank of the 52nd Division had to fall back. The 75th Division, advancing along the main road from Jaffa to Jerusalem, were soon fiercely engaged. But of its four Indian battalions two were Gurkhas, and one, the 58th Vaughan's Rifles, was one of the units of the famous Frontier Force, so hill warfare such as this advance gave them was very much in their line. The 2/3rd Gurkhas on the left and 58th Rifles on the right picketed the hills which flanked the road and protected the main advance. After two days' fighting Qaryet el 'Inab, the Biblical Kirjath Jearim, was reached. Beyond it, however, the Turks had strong fortifications astride the road, and the bulk of the division moved to the left, north-eastward, to co-operate with the 52nd in attacking the key-position of Nabi Samweil, a hill only 200 feet lower than Ben Lomond. This led to some desperate fighting; on November 21st a lodgement was gained on Nabi Samweil, the 123rd Outram's Rifles and 3/3rd Gurkhas being among the assaulting battalions, but the Turks counter-attacked and held up all further advance. On November 23rd a fresh effort was made to push on and take El Jib, a flat-topped hill to the north of Nabi Samweil and about the height of the highest Cheviots. In this the 2/3rd Gurkhas were engaged, but the attack though gallantly pressed failed to take El Jib, though the hold which the 75th Division had acquired on Nabi Samweil was not relaxed and proved invaluable when early in December the second and finally successful advance on Jerusalem was made. The work of the 75th Division was fittingly recognized by a key being approved by General Allenby as its divisional badge in recognition of its contribution to the capture of Jerusalem, its taking and holding of the key-position of Nabi Samweil. Thus the little Indian contingent had taken their full share in a famous and dramatic success, and the good fighting of the four battalions had found a parallel in the fine work of the Indian gunners of the Hong Kong and Singapore Battery, whose small mountain guns were among the very few pieces of artillery which had been able to get up to the front along with the infantry. Indeed, it was through our lack of artillery to support the infantry that the attack was brought to a standstill.

A halt had now to be called till adequate preparations for a final attack could be made. The railway had to be pushed on, existing roads and tracks were improved, and new roads constructed to enable heavy and field artillery to be placed in position and ammunition and supplies brought up. The water supply was also developed. Meanwhile our troops were advancing steadily along the road from Beersheba to Jerusalem, and by the evening of the 6th of December were 10 miles north of Hebrón. The time had now come for that dramatic movement on Jerusalem itself—a movement important enough for purely military purposes, but so much more important because of the effect upon men's minds throughout all the civilized world.

By the 7th of December we were ready. But now our fortune failed us; the fine weather which had so far favoured our movements broke, 'and for three days rain was almost continuous. The hills were covered with mist at frequent intervals, rendering observation from the air and visual signalling impossible.' Worse still, the roads were made 'quite impassable for mechanical transport and camels in many places.' Nevertheless, the troops moved into positions of assembly on the night of the 7th and, assaulting at dawn on the 8th, soon carried their first objectives. They then pressed steadily forward. Considerable opposition was encountered, and progress was slow through having to climb steep and rocky hill-sides and cross deep valleys. Also the difficulty of moving guns forward made it almost impossible to give the infantry artillery support. But by about noon London troops had already advanced over 2 miles and the Yeomanry had secured an important spur. We then captured all the enemy's prepared defences west and north-west of Jerusalem and were only  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles from the town itself. No further advance that day could, however, be made because the right column had been delayed some distance south of Jerusalem.

Next morning—the 9th of December—the advance was resumed. It was then found that the Turks had withdrawn during the night, and our troops driving back rear-guards were able to occupy the road to Nablus 4 miles north of Jerusalem and a position on the road to Jericho east of the town. These operations isolated the town. At noon it surrendered, and on the 11th Allenby made his official entry. An important



strategic position had been taken. But, better still, all Christendom was heartened by the capture of a city with such sacred associations.

Our troops occupied Jerusalem, but the enemy was still only 4 miles off. Before any further advance could be made the roads had to be improved, and supplies and ammunition brought up. While these preparations were being made the enemy attacked with great determination along the Nablus-Jerusalem road with the object of regaining that city. This attack was launched at 11.30 p.m. on the 26th of December. Our outposts were driven in at some points, but, though the enemy made repeated assaults, he only succeeded at one point in reaching our main position and was then immediately driven out by the local reserves. In all these attacks he lost heavily. Attacks made east of Jerusalem were no more successful. Nor did we merely stand on the defensive. We counter-attacked the enemy, and this counter-attack with two divisions resulted in an advance of 4,000 yards on a 6-mile front. The enemy's initiative was taken from him, and he was forced to abandon his attempt to recapture Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup>

On the 28th of December Allenby ordered a general advance northward, and by the evening of the 30th his troops had advanced on a front of 12 miles to a depth varying from 6 miles on the right to 3 miles on the left. As a result of this advance his force 'was in a far better position to cover Jerusalem and the towns of Ramle and Jaffa and the road which, running from Jaffa to Jerusalem, formed the chief artery of lateral communication' behind his line. The Turkish attempt to recapture Jerusalem had thus ended in crushing defeat.

No further advance north was possible for the time being. Until the railway had reached a point considerably nearer the front it was impossible to proceed with the necessary accumulation of stores, supplies, and ammunition. Moreover, before a further advance in a northerly direction could be made it was necessary to drive the enemy across the Jordan, so as to render the British right flank secure. An advance to the Jordan was therefore the next step contemplated by

<sup>1</sup> The 75th Division had no hand in this fighting, having taken over part of the line nearer the coast and north-east of Jaffa, where it remained for some months, having several minor encounters with the Turks but making no big attack. For these pages see General Allenby's dispatch of 18 September 1918.

General Allenby. By being denied the crossings of the Jordan the enemy would be prevented from raiding the tract of country to the west of the Dead Sea ; the control of the Dead Sea would pass to us ; and, lastly, a point of departure would be obtained for harrying the enemy's line of communications with the Hejaz.

'The chief obstacle to the advance lay in the difficulties of the ground rather than in any opposition the enemy might offer. The descent from . . . Jerusalem to the valley of the Jordan is very steep.' The banks of the wadis are often precipitous, rendering any crossing from one bank to the other impossible. Moreover, a series of ridges afforded the enemy strong defensive positions. These obstacles were not, however, considered insuperable ; and the general plan adopted consisted of a direct advance by the 60th Division to the cliffs over-looking Jericho, while the Australian and New Zealand Mounted Division was to co-operate on the right flank in order to cut off the enemy's retreat.

The advance began on the 19th of February 1918. Considerable opposition was met with, but the enemy were driven from point to point, and on the 21st of February the 60th Division and an Australian mounted brigade captured Jericho. The enemy were driven across the Jordan, and Allenby's right flank was thus made safe. But he had not yet secured a base sufficiently broad to enable him to carry out operations against the Hejaz Railway. A series of operations had therefore to be undertaken to clear the Jordan valley still farther north. The fall to the Jordan is short and sharp, the whole country is very intricate, and progress through it was difficult. But by the 12th of March the Jordan valley had been sufficiently cleared to enable Allenby to carry out operations against the Turkish line of communications to the Hejaz in conjunction with the Arab forces under Emir Feisal.

These Arab forces were based on 'Aqaba. In January 1918 the Emir had captured the heights 7 miles from the important station of Ma'an on the Hejaz Railway. Other Arab forces had captured the forest north-west of Ma'an and destroyed much of the light railway which was used to transport fuel for the railway. Severe fighting between Arabs and Turks had also taken place 15 miles south-east of the Dead Sea.

To assist the Arabs in attacking Ma'an, Allenby on the

21st of March made a raid on Amman 30 miles east by north of Jericho. The railway here 'crosses a viaduct and passes through a tunnel. If these could be destroyed it would be some weeks before traffic could be resumed.' Even if this could not be done 'the mere threat of a repetition of this raid would compel the enemy to maintain a considerable force to cover Amman.' The troops available to operate against the Arabs would be thus reduced. Unfortunately heavy rain fell, seriously impeding the movement of the troops. The enemy were therefore enabled to bring up reinforcements. No permanent demolitions were possible, but much of the railway north and south of Amman was destroyed, considerable loss was inflicted on the Turks, they were forced to concentrate troops at Amman for its defence, Ma'an was made open to attack, and Emir Feisul was, in consequence, able to make successful raids upon it, doing much damage to the railway.

Simultaneously with these operations the troops in the Judaeen hills pushed forward at several points, the Indian units in the 75th Division making an advance in the foot-hills near the coastal plain, and this would have been followed up by operations on a larger scale had not the opening of the great German offensive of the spring of 1918, designed to crush the British Army, made it necessary for the British High Command to withdraw all available British troops from Palestine to France and to replace them by Indian troops. From this time onwards, therefore, India played a much more prominent part than heretofore in the Palestine campaign. The 7th (Meerut) Division and the 3rd (Lahore) Division, which had performed such signal service to the Empire in France during the early critical days of the war and which had afterwards served with distinction during the advance on Baghdad, had already been withdrawn from Mesopotamia and were on their way to Palestine before the German offensive began, while the transfer of the Indian cavalry regiments from France to replace Yeomanry units had been ordered in February and was also in progress. But an even more important step was what was known as the 'Indianization' of four of the British infantry divisions in the E.E.F. One of these, the 75th, as already mentioned, contained a proportion of Indian battalions, which was now increased from a third to three-quarters, the others, the 10th (Irish), 53rd (Welsh), and the 60th (London)

were placed on a uniform establishment of three British and ten Indian battalions, the latter including one of pioneers. Of the British battalions thus relieved, the majority proceeded to France, where some, chiefly 'second-line' London Territorials or Irish Service battalions, were utilized as reinforcements for shattered units, others were incorporated in divisions which, like the 34th, 50th, and 66th, had to be re-formed from battalions hitherto serving in the eastern theatres of war. A few of those left in Palestine had to be drafted straight away to the battalions destined to be retained in the 'Indianized' divisions. In all thirty-seven Indian battalions were required to fill up the gaps in the E.E.F. Of these four were available in the country, the 1/23rd and 2/23rd Pioneers and 1/101st and 2/101st Grenadiers, twenty were dispatched from India,<sup>1</sup> the remainder<sup>2</sup> being raised in Egypt by the process described in an earlier chapter.<sup>3</sup> The formation of these new units took some time, and although the method which was adopted in forming them ensured the presence in their ranks of a good proportion of trained and experienced men, it was impossible to carry out any very active operations during this period of reorganization. But it was a work of the utmost importance, and the success with which the 'Indianization' was carried out is greatly to the credit of those who planned it, made it possible, and actually saw it through. It meant the reinforcement of the British Armies in France by nearly 50,000 men in infantry alone, and as in the closing stages of the Palestine campaign a third of the cavalry and nearly two-thirds of the infantry under General Allenby's command belonged to the Indian Army, the great victory which shattered the Turkish power in Palestine and Syria may fairly be reckoned among the triumphs of that army.<sup>4</sup> But before General Allenby

<sup>1</sup> Ten of these were old units, the 1/17th Infantry, 1/21st Punjabis, 29th Punjabis, 38th Dogras, 46th Punjabis, 1/54th Sikhs, 72nd and 74th Punjabis, 110th Mahrattas and 130th Baluchis; two, the 1st and 3rd Kashmir Infantry, were Imperial Service troops; the others had been raised since the outbreak of war and were the 2nd Guides, the 2/19th Punjabis, 2/30th Punjabis, 2/32nd Pioneers, 2/42nd Deolis, 1/50th Kumaon Rifles, 2/97th Deccan Infantry, 2/127th Baluchis.

<sup>2</sup> The 4/11th Gurkhas, 2/151st Infantry and 3/151st Infantry, 1/152nd, 2/152nd and 3/152nd Infantry, 1/153rd, 2/153rd and 3/153rd Infantry, 2/154th and 3/154th Infantry, and 1/155th and 2/155th Pioneers.

<sup>3</sup> See Chap. III, pp. 188-9.

<sup>4</sup> The reorganization of the cavalry proceeded on somewhat similar lines. The 1st and 2nd Mounted Divisions were reconstituted on a basis of one Yeomanry and two Indian units in each brigade, and their connexion with the Indian Cavalry

could launch his final blow at the Turks there was of necessity a long pause, and a stalemate seemed to have come into being on the Palestine front. All these changes necessitated much reorganization of the forces during the summer months, and the new Indian troops required a great deal of training, a special difficulty being the lack of British officers who spoke the languages of these Indians and knew their customs. Allenby would have preferred putting off his great final offensive against the Turks till the new Indian battalions had accustomed themselves to local conditions, but the rains usually begin at the end of October, rendering the plains of Sharon and Esdraelon impassable for transport, except along the few existing roads. Consequently, he could not postpone operations beyond the middle of September. In the meantime a constant series of small raids and outpost actions fulfilled the double purpose of giving to the newcomers a first taste of fighting and of worrying and wearing down the Turks.<sup>1</sup>

At the beginning of September the enemy's fighting strength was estimated at 4,000 sabres, 32,000 rifles, and 400 guns; and Allenby had at his disposal 12,000 sabres, 57,000 rifles, and 540 guns. He had therefore a considerable superiority, especially in mounted troops. On the other hand the Turks occupied a country difficult of access and easy to defend. Allenby's activities in the spring had led the enemy to believe that he would strike his blow east of the Jordan or north of Jerusalem. But he had the opposite intention, and meant to strike well to the west of the Jordan along the coastal plain. Further, as the enemy had almost the whole of his force in the front line and very little in reserve, Allenby intended, by breaking through the front line, to make full use of his superiority in mounted troops and cut the Turkish line of communication with Damascus by occupying the plain of Esdraelon and the valley of Jezreel.

Divisions which had served in France was recognized by their being renumbered as the 4th and 5th Cavalry Divisions. To complete the 5th Cavalry Division to three brigades, for it had left its Canadian brigade in France, a new Imperial Service Cavalry brigade was organized out of the Hyderabad and Mysore Lancers which had served so long in Egypt, and the Jodhpur Lancers which had accompanied the Regular Indian cavalry from France. This brigade, numbered the 15th, distinguished itself greatly in a minor action in the Jordan valley in July, the Jodhpur Lancers making a brilliant and successful charge.

<sup>1</sup> For these pages see General Allenby's dispatch of 31 October, 1918.

By reducing the strength of the troops in the Jordan valley to a minimum and by withdrawing his reserves from the hills north of Jerusalem, Allenby was able, without attracting the attention of the enemy, to concentrate five divisions with a total of 383 guns for the attack of the very strong defences of the Turks in the coastal plain. In addition two cavalry divisions and one Australian mounted division were available for this front. Thus on the front of attack he concentrated 35,000 rifles against 8,000, and 383 guns against 130. It was this masterly movement before attack that assured success in the subsequent operations. Lieutenant-General Sir Edward Bulfin was put in command of the attack, and he was ordered to break through the enemy's defences between the railway and the sea. The 3rd (Lahore) Division and the 7th (Meerut) Division formed part of the force under his command.

The secret concentration in the coastal plain had been completed by the morning of the 18th of September, and the enemy, by feint attacks east of the Jordan and by Arab movements, had been led to believe that it was Allenby's intention to attack Amman and the Hejaz Railway. On the morning of the 19th the real attack was made. At 4.30 a.m. the artillery opened an intense bombardment, under cover of which the infantry moved forward from their positions. 'The enemy replied energetically to our bombardment, but in most cases his barrage fell behind the attacking infantry.' The attack of the infantry was delivered with the greatest dash, and went extraordinarily well. On the left of the line next the sea was the 60th Division (Major-General Sir J. S. M. Shea), in which were included the 2nd Guides, 2/19th Punjabis, 2/30th Punjabis, 1/50th Kumaon Rifles, 2/97th Deccan Infantry, 2/127th Baluchis, 1/30th Baluchis, and 3/151st Infantry. Its task was to break through a trench system north-east of Arsuf, consisting of three lines of prepared positions, and then, pushing up the coast, to secure the passages over the Nahr el Falik, a deep cut by which the inland marshes drain into the sea. It had some hard fighting in which the Guides did well and the Kumaons fairly won their spurs, and it carried out its programme to the letter, opening the way for the cavalry to stream through. Next the 60th came the Meerut Division, now commanded by Major-General Sir V. B. Fane. Included in it were the British battalions which had earned so much credit for it in France and Mesopo-

tamia, the 2nd Leicesters, 2nd Black Watch, and 1st Seaforths, but of its Indian units only the 125th Rifles had been in France. The 51st and 53rd Sikhs and 56th Rifles had joined it in Egypt on its way to Mesopotamia, and had added to its laurels in that country. The 20th, 28th, and 92nd Punjabis, 1st Guides, 1/8th Gurkhas, and 121st Pioneers completed the Division. In its last big fight the Meerut Division did not fall short of its past achievements. Its first objective was quickly won, and then, wheeling to the right, it attacked and took the western portion of the formidable Et Tireh defences and thereby opened the way for the 4th Cavalry Division, which was following hard on its heels, to pass through. On the right of the Meerut Division was Major-General Palin's 75th Division, now including the 29th Punjabis, 58th Rifles, 72nd Punjabis, 123rd Rifles, 1/152nd and 2/154th Infantry, 2/3rd and 3/3rd Gurkhas, 2/32nd Pioneers and 3rd Kashmir I. S. Infantry. Its task was the capture of the Et Tireh defences, Miskeh and Et Tireh itself, which last the 72nd Punjabis, 2/3rd Gurkhas, and 3rd Kashmirs reached about 8 a.m., but only finally secured after three hours' sharp fighting. Beyond them the Lahore Division under Major-General A. R. Hoskins was confronted by two strongly defended hills known as Brown Hill and Fir Hill, behind which lay a village called Sabieh which had been elaborately fortified. These positions, however, it mastered comparatively easily, and then, with the 7th Brigade (1st Connaught Rangers, 27th and 91st Punjabis, and 2/7th Gurkhas) on the right and 9th Brigade (2nd Dorsets,<sup>1</sup> 93rd Burma Infantry, 105th Mahratta L. I., and 1/1st Gurkhas) on the left, it swung eastward and attacked the positions about the railway between Jaljulye and Qalqilye. These were formidable, but the 8th Brigade (1st Manchesters, 47th Sikhs, 59th Rifles<sup>2</sup> and 2/124th Baluchistan Infantry) were put in to support the attack; by its help the defences were carried and by noon the Division had penetrated to a depth of two miles into the Turkish position.

<sup>1</sup> This unit, originally in the 6th Indian Division which distinguished itself so greatly in the early stages of the Mesopotamian operations, had been re-formed after the fall of Kut and had replaced the 1st H.L.I. in this brigade in the course of 1917.

<sup>2</sup> These three units had served with the Lahore Division continuously since August 1914 in three theatres of war, as had the Connaught Rangers, the 1/1st Gurkhas and the Divisional pioneer battalion, the 34th Sikh Pioneers.

Beyond the Lahore Division came the 54th, the only one in which no Indian units were included. It also was speedily and completely successful. The success of the first attack was promptly followed up, not only by the cavalry who poured through the gaps that had been made for them and were soon profiting to the full by their opportunities, but by the infantry themselves. The 75th Division was halted at Et Tireh in reserve, but the other four pressed on eastward and northward, giving the Turks no rest and no time to rally or re-form. As our men pressed on to the junction of Tul Karm, 'bodies of troops, guns, motor lorries, and transport of every description were endeavouring to escape along the road leading to Messudie and Nablus. This road, which follows the railway up a narrow valley, was already crowded with troops and transport,' and the havoc was increased by attacks from our aeroplanes and by the Australian mounted troops making a detour and seizing a position which commanded the road. By evening the infantry had reached a line from Rafat by 'Azzun to Tul Karm Station, and many units had covered over 20 miles. If the victory of September 19th will always be remembered for the brilliant way in which Allenby's cavalry improved and exploited it, the splendid work of the infantry, their dash in attack, the rapidity and force of their advance, must not be overlooked.

As soon as the success of the attack was assured, Allenby ordered an advance on Nablus to be made that night by the two divisions of the XXth Corps. These, the 10th and the 53rd, were holding the front from Rafat eastward, and had not taken part in the original attack, though a minor operation by the latter division on the night of September 18th a few miles east of the Nablus road helped to distract the attention of the Turks from the real point of attack. The enemy had long expected an attack from the direction of Jerusalem on Nablus, and had constructed defences of great strength on successive ridges. Nor were the Turkish troops in this portion of the field disorganized, and they were able to oppose a sturdy resistance to the advance. Moreover, 'the country is broken and rugged, demanding great physical exertion on the part of the troops and preventing the artillery keeping pace with the infantry.' Nevertheless, when on the night of the 19th the 10th attacked west of the Nablus road and the 53rd east



of it, they made good progress.<sup>1</sup> Both divisions were stoutly opposed, the 10th finding four German battalions in the sector which it attacked; but both fought well, the 2/42nd Deolis making no less than nine successive efforts against one particular ridge, and their vigorous pressure upon the as yet unbroken Turkish centre was no small factor in the general success. It was the determination with which on September 21st they pressed forward rapidly over exceedingly difficult country that brought them to Nablus that evening and cut off the only remaining line of retreat open to the main Turkish Army, down the Wadi Farah to the fords of the Jordan at Jisr ed Damye. Further east, again, in the operations beyond the Jordan which completed the Turkish rout by destroying their 4th Army, India was represented by the 20th (Imperial Service) Infantry Brigade, in which were serving the Alwar, Patiala, and Gwalior Infantry and the 110th Mahrattas. If the hard fighting which fell to the infantry west of Jordan did not come their way, they too did well, marched hard and far, and carried out an important and arduous task effectively.

All this time the cavalry were making the great advance which was to sever the enemy's communications. Even before the infantry had attacked in the early morning of the 19th September, the two cavalry divisions and the Australian Mounted Division had formed up in rear of the infantry ready to take advantage of any break in the enemy's line. Immediately that break was made they advanced, and by noon the leading troops of the Desert Mounted Corps were 18 miles north of the original front line. After a brief rest they pushed on, and the 5th Cavalry Division<sup>2</sup> riding through the hills of Samaria pressed forward into the Plain of Esdraelon, the

<sup>1</sup> The 10th (Major-General J. R. Longley) had three Irish Regular battalions which were serving in India in August 1914 and had come home to form the 27th Division, from which they had later on been transferred to the 10th; with them were the 38th Dogras, 2/42nd Deolis, 46th and 74th Punjabis, 1/54th Sikhs, 1/101st and 2/101st Grenadiers, 2/151st Infantry, and 1st Kashmir I.S. Infantry. The Indian infantry in Major-General S. F. Mott's 53rd Division were nearly all improvised new units, the 1/17th Infantry and the 1/21st Punjabis being the only old battalions; the others were the 3/152nd, 1/153rd, 2/153rd, and 3/153rd and 3/154th Infantry and the 4/11th Gurkhas.

<sup>2</sup> This was commanded by Major-General H. J. M. Macandrew and included two Yeomanry regiments, with the 9th Hodson's Horse, the 18th Lancers, the 20th Deccan Horse, the 34th Poona Horse, and the three Imperial Service cavalry regiments.

13th Cavalry Brigade<sup>1</sup> being directed on Nazareth, which it reached at 5.30 a.m. on the 20th, nearly capturing the German general Liman von Sanders and actually capturing his papers and some of his staff. Within thirty-six hours of the commencement of the battle all the main outlets of escape remaining to the Turks on the west of the Jordan had been seized. They could only avoid capture by using the tracks to the crossings of the Jordan and these were being rapidly closed. Allenby's surprise attack with overwhelming force at the selected point, and his immediate and daring use of his cavalry, had been successful to the fullest expectations, and the Turkish Army was now in his hands.

The enemy's resistance had been broken on the 20th of September, and on the 21st all organized resistance ceased. On that day we captured Nablus. In the Turkish rear the greatest confusion prevailed. Camps and hospitals were being hastily evacuated, and roads leading north and east were congested with traffic. The disorganization of the enemy was increased by attacks by our airmen. On the 22nd we had seized the bridges over the Jordan, thus destroying all chance of escape in that direction. Great quantities of transport and numerous guns were abandoned by the Turks, and many bodies of Turks began surrendering to the cavalry who charged into the columns. The Turkish forces had ceased to exist as an army, and but few escaped.

Meanwhile the cavalry had been advancing on Haifa and Acre on the coast, and Indian cavalry had an opportunity of displaying their qualities. The 5th Cavalry Division was shelled from the slopes of Mount Carmel 2 miles east of Haifa on the 23rd, and found the road and river-crossings defended by numerous machine guns. 'Whilst the Mysore Lancers were clearing the rocky slopes of Mount Carmel, the Jodhpur Lancers charged through the defile, and riding over the enemy's machine guns galloped into the town, where a number of Turks were speared in the streets. Colonel Thakur Dalpat Singh, M.C., fell gallantly leading the charge.' At Acre little opposition was met with, and the small garrison was overtaken and captured while attempting to escape to the north.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gloucestershire Hussars, Hodson's Horse, and the 18th Lancers.

<sup>2</sup> The Meerut Division, following hard behind the cavalry, occupied Haifa on September 29th and then pushed on northwards past Tyre and Sidon to Beirut.

Thus all the country to the west of the Jordan had now been cleared, and the position of the Turks on the east had become untenable. By the 23rd the Turks were in full retreat, pursued by the Australian and New Zealand Mounted Division and bombed by airmen. On the 25th Amman was attacked and captured, the enemy retreating northwards along the Hejaz Railway and the Pilgrims' Route harassed by our airmen and the Arabs, and pursued by the Australians and New Zealanders. Further south Ma'an had been evacuated by the Turks on the 23rd September and had been occupied by the Arab Army under Emir Feisul.

The Turkish Army Corps retreating from the Hejaz was thus cut off, and on the 29th of September the Turkish commander, seeing that escape was impossible, surrendered with 5,000 men.

The way was now clear for an advance on Damascus; and the Desert Mounted Corps was ordered to make their advance in two columns, one proceeding by the north end and the other by the south end of the Sea of Galilee. On the 25th Tiberias was captured. Considerable difficulty was experienced in crossing the Jordan on the 27th, but the Australian Mounted Division overcame the opposition and pressing on drove back the enemy's rear-guards, and by the 30th were 12 miles south-west of Damascus. On the same date the 4th Cavalry Division and the Arab Army were approaching Damascus from the south.

During the evening of the 30th of September the Australians, after breaking down the enemy's opposition, closed the exits from Damascus to the north and west, while the 5th Cavalry Division reached the southern outskirts of the town, and at 6 a.m. on the 1st of October the Desert Mounted Corps and the Arab Army entered Damascus amidst scenes of great enthusiasm.

'After the German and Turkish troops in the town had been collected and guards had been posted, our troops were withdrawn. In the meantime the 3rd Australian Light Horse Brigade had proceeded northward in pursuit of bodies of the enemy which had succeeded in leaving the town on the previous day.'

The Desert Mounted Corps had had a severe strain put upon it in the advance to Damascus, but Allenby was so anxious to exploit the success which had been achieved in

the break-up of the Turkish Armies in Palestine and Syria that he ordered the corps to move on Beirut on the 5th of October. The occupation of this town would give him a port with a road and railway running inland to Damascus, and an alternative and shorter line of supply would thus be secured. The corps encountered no opposition, and occupied the important junction of Rayak on the 6th of October.

To support this movement the 7th (Meerut) Division had left Haifa on the 3rd of October and marched along the coast to Beirut. Crossing the Ladder of Tyre it was received by the populace of Tyre and Sidon with enthusiasm. On the 8th of October the Division reached Beirut where it was warmly welcomed, the inhabitants handing over 660 Turks who had surrendered to them. Ships of the French Navy had already entered the harbour.

Allenby was not even yet content. He continued to press his advantage to the very utmost. On the 9th of October he ordered the Desert Mounted Corps again to advance and occupy Homs, and he ordered the XXIst Corps to continue its march along the coast to Tripoli. On the 15th of October Homs was occupied, and on the 13th of October the XXIst Corps Cavalry Regiment and armoured cars occupied Tripoli without opposition. Having thus seized Homs and Tripoli, Allenby determined to deliver his final blow and capture Aleppo. His mounted troops were already severely strained and many were suffering from sickness. But time was of importance, and he judged that the 5th Cavalry Division<sup>1</sup> would be sufficient for the purpose. There were indeed some 20,000 Turks and Germans in Aleppo, but of these only about 8,000 were combatants and they were demoralized. Moreover, numbers were leaving the town daily for the north.

So the cavalry and armoured cars pressed on. Five miles south of Aleppo the armoured cars were checked by strong Turkish rear-guards on the 24th October and had to remain in observation till the 15th (Imperial Service) Cavalry Brigade caught them up. On the 25th the brigade arrived and the cars and cavalry pressed on. The same evening a detachment of the Arab Army reached the outskirts of Aleppo, and during

<sup>1</sup> For the composition of the 5th Cavalry Division see above, p. 277, note 2. The Imperial Service cavalry regiments were much to the fore in the last stages of the campaign.

the night forced their way into the town, inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy.<sup>1</sup> Early in the morning of the 26th the cars and Imperial Service Cavalry, moving round the west of the town, followed the enemy along the Aleppo-Katma road and gained touch with them south-east of Haritan. Here a Turkish rear-guard of 2,500 infantry, 150 cavalry, and 8 guns were charged by the Mysore Lancers and two squadrons of the Jodhpur Lancers covered by the armoured cars and two dismounted squadrons of the Jodhpur Lancers. They forced the enemy to fall back, but were not strong enough to complete their victory.

Not only was Aleppo captured but the junction of Muslimie was also occupied and an advance to Alexandretta was planned. But before the final stroke could be delivered the Armistice with Turkey was concluded. It came into force on the 31st of October, and thus brought Allenby's brilliant campaign to a close.

The results of that campaign were summarized in his dispatch. Aleppo is over 300 miles from the original front line. The 5th Cavalry Division had covered 500 miles between the 19th September and 26th October and had captured over 11,000 prisoners and 52 guns. Altogether in that period 75,000 prisoners were captured, including 3,700 Germans and Austrians. In addition 360 guns and the transport and equipment of three Turkish armies fell into our hands. The captures included over 800 machine guns, 210 motor lorries, 44 motor cars, 89 railway engines, 468 carriages and trucks, and some 3,500 animals.

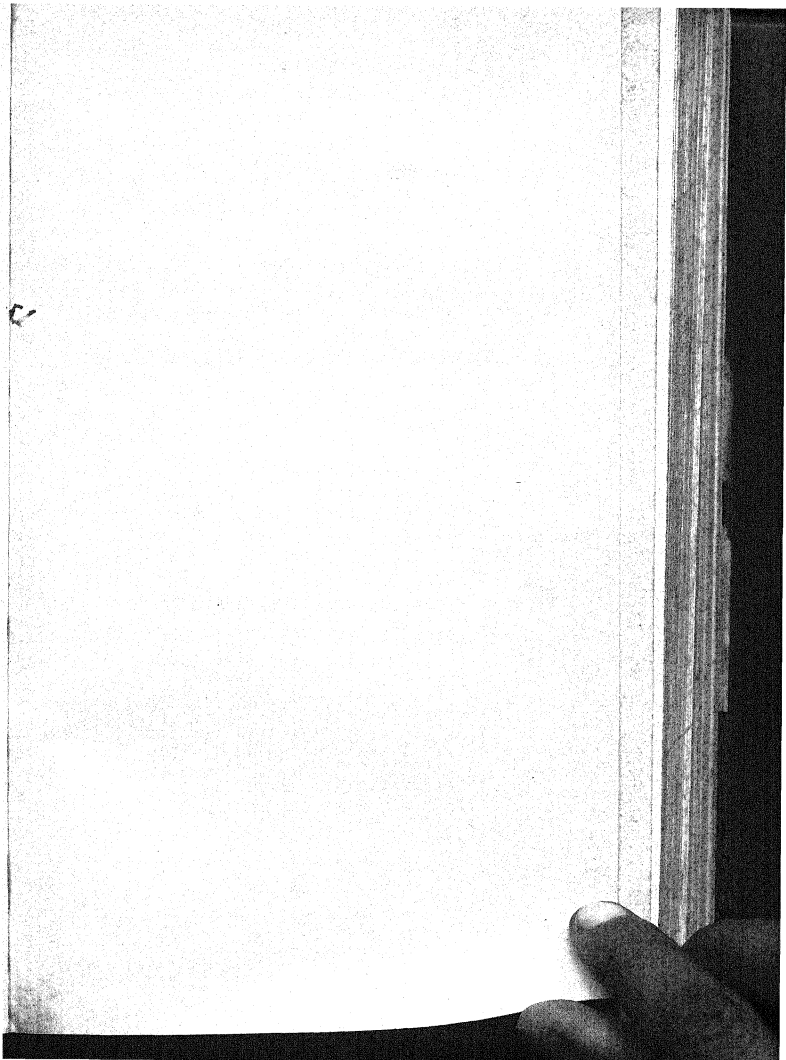
This magnificent success was primarily due to Allenby's generalship, to the skill with which he had planned his attack, the secrecy with which he had made his preparations and moved his troops, and the relentlessness with which he had pursued the enemy once they were broken. It was also due to the dash of the infantry who 'in a few hours broke through the defences which the enemy had spent months in strengthening.' By thus making a break in the enemy's line the infantry enabled the cavalry to accomplish its mission. 'The subsequent advance through the hills over most difficult country, and in face of determined and organized resistance by the enemy's rear-

<sup>1</sup> Three days later the Meerut Division concentrated at Tripoli, having covered 270 miles since the advance began.

guards, tried the infantry severely. Nothing, however, stopped its progress, and the relentless pressure maintained on the enemy's rear-guards allowed him no time to carry out an organized retreat and drove him, in disorganized bodies, into the arms of the cavalry.

'The Desert Mounted Corps took some 46,000 prisoners during the operations. The complete destruction of the 7th and 8th Turkish Armies depended mainly on the rapidity with which their communications were reached, and on quick decision in dealing with the enemy's columns as they attempted to escape. The vigorous handling of the cavalry by its leaders and the rapidity of its movements overcame all attempts to delay its progress. The enemy's columns, after they had outdistanced the pursuing infantry, were given no time to reorganize and fight their way through.'

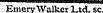
Thus just as it was by the Indian Army that the first success was scored in the defence of Egypt against the Turk, so in the final blow in the long offensive which had started from Qantara and only ended at Aleppo because the Turk had had enough, the Indian Army was to the fore. Certainly if India's direct contribution to the breaking of the Gaza and Beersheba line and to the taking of Jerusalem had been comparatively small, it is not too much to say that but for the Indian Army, for the great work by which it had been developed and expanded to nearly double its old strength, the crowning victory of September 19th could not have been achieved.



English Miles

20 10 0 20 40 60 80 100

Railways



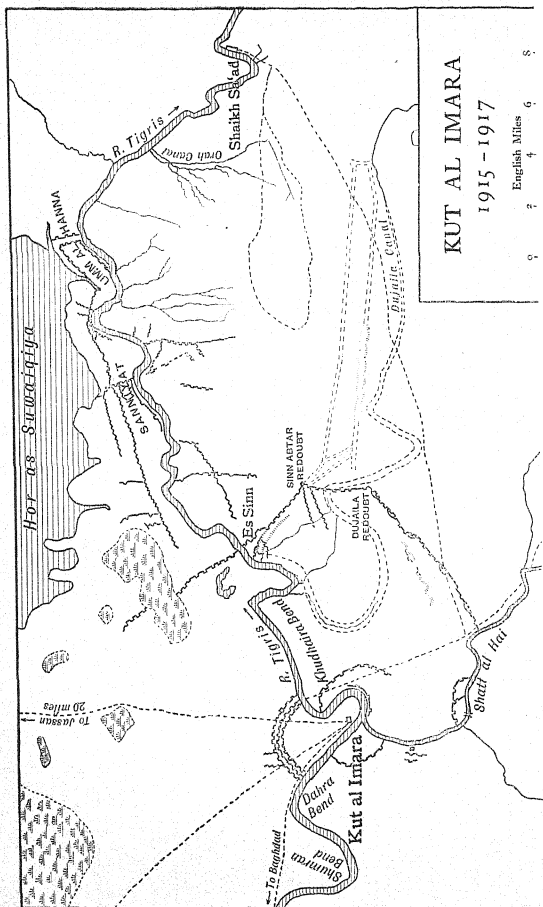


## CHAPTER VIII

### MESOPOTAMIA

OF all the theatres of the war Mesopotamia was the most closely connected with India. Of recent years the Germans had shown marked interest in this region. The Berlin-Baghdad Railway was an attractive vision filling their imagination. It led towards the Persian Gulf, the Persian Gulf led to India, and India held boundless possibilities of wealth. When the Turks joined them in the war, the Germans looked to their allies to command if possible an outlet on the Persian Gulf—and incidentally to occupy the Anglo-Persian oil-field near Ahwaz which was one of the principal sources of oil supply for the British Navy.

The British, however, were on the alert, and had anticipated enemy efforts to establish themselves on the Persian Gulf. In the very early days of the war they had drawn up plans for the occupation of Basra, not only to forestall the enemy on the Persian Gulf but also to impress the Arabs, to protect the Anglo-Persian oil installations, and to help in safeguarding Egypt. The 6th (Poona) Division, out of the troops intended for service in Europe, was reserved for an expedition to the Persian Gulf, and in the middle of October 1914—that is, well before November 1st, when Turkey declared war—the 16th Infantry Brigade of this Division embarked at Bombay to occupy Abadan, the island in the Shatt-al-'Arab on which were situated the refineries of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company. This force, commanded by Brigadier-General Delamain, reached Bahrein, an island in the Persian Gulf belonging to the British, on October 23rd, and, having on November 6th bombarded and occupied the Turkish village and fort of Fao, on November 8th disembarked at Sanniya on the Turkish shore opposite Abadan. About the same day a Turkish force, after marching rapidly from Baghdad, had arrived at Basra. Turkish troops were pushed down to oppose the British at Sanniya; they attacked on November 11th but were beaten off, and by November 13th the main body of the 6th Division under the command of



# KUT AL IMARA

1915 - 1917

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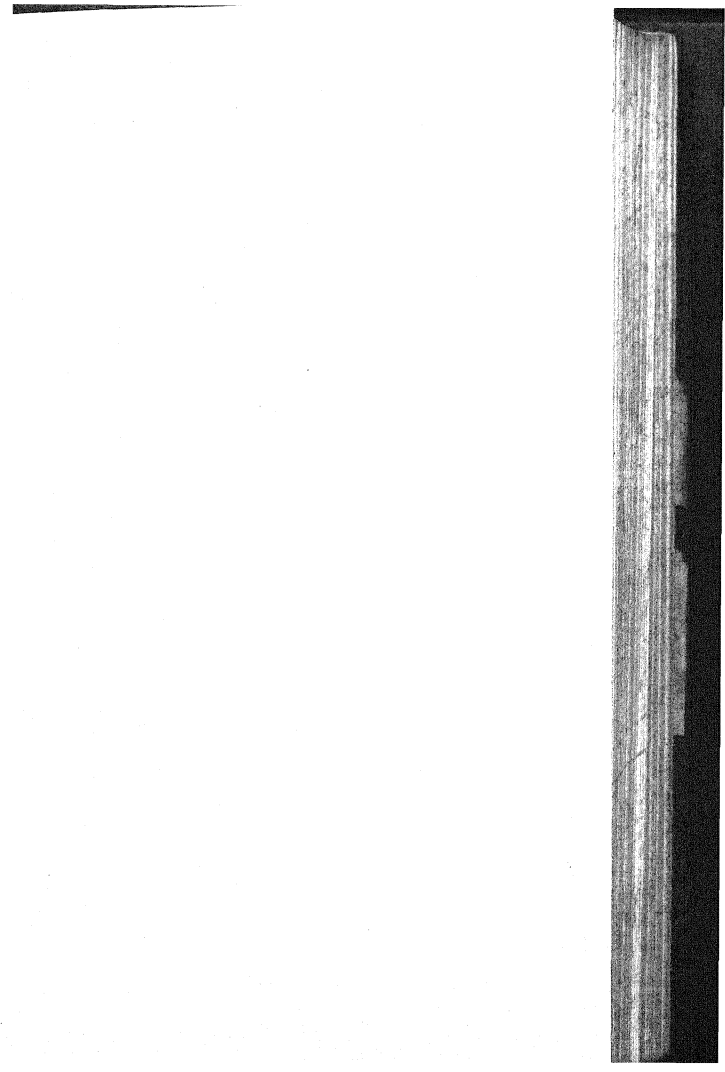
Lieutenant-General Sir A. A. Barrett had arrived. On November 17th the Turkish force was attacked and defeated at Sahil, and on November 22nd, three weeks after the Turkish declaration of war, Basra was occupied by the British, the German scheme for gaining a footing on the Persian Gulf was frustrated, and the very important oil-fields saved. Such were the results of a timely and bold offensive. Many and grievous troubles were to follow, and stupendous difficulties of supply and transport had to be overcome. But an initial advantage had been gained from which the enemy were never able to recover.

General Barrett had with him an insufficient force to conduct offensive operations against the Turks on any great scale, and Basra was inadequately equipped as a base; nevertheless he was not inactive. He struck out at Al Qurna, which lies at the junction of the Tigris and Euphrates about 50 miles higher up the river than Basra, and forced the Turks there to surrender on the 9th December. With the capture of Qurna the expedition had reached a point where it seemed that a halt might be called; the danger to the oil-fields had been averted, a definite military superiority over the Turks had been established, a lead had been given to the Arabs, and the prospect of the Persian Gulf being used as a base for German designs on India had been dispelled. In a word, a definite strategical objective had been achieved, and with the manifold calls on the military resources of the Empire prudence might have urged that it would be well to be content and to commit ourselves no deeper in this quarter. However, it soon became apparent that our inactivity was encouraging the Turks to plan a counter-offensive and had checked the tendency to join us which the Arabs had at first displayed. Indeed, the Jihad which the Turks were sedulously preaching was making considerable progress, early in the New Year the situation in Arabistan became unsatisfactory, and it grew clear that measures must be taken to protect the pipe-line to the oil-fields. Thus at a very early stage in the operations it became apparent that it is easier to embark on a campaign than to keep that campaign within the limits originally contemplated. The first increase in the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force was sanctioned on January 15th, 1915, just two months after the first landing, and on March 18th it was decided to bring 'Force D', as General

Barrett's command was officially known, up to the strength of an Army Corps by improvising a 12th Indian Division out of two brigades from India and one from Egypt, where the repulse of the Turkish attack on the Suez Canal had considerably improved the situation. A cavalry brigade was also to be added to the force.

At the beginning of April Sir John Nixon was sent to take command in Mesopotamia with orders to occupy the whole of the Basra vilayet and report on a subsequent advance on Baghdad. These measures taken for an increase of the force were only just in time. The Turks, from An Nasiriya on the Euphrates, where they had been collecting for some time, encouraged by the inactivity which had succeeded the first British irruption, had pushed forward to Barjisiya, close to Basra, where, however, they were met and defeated on April 14th by General Melliss. In this action at Shu'aiba, it should be noted, all but one of the Indian infantry units belonged to the Bombay Presidency. Faced by greatly superior numbers of hard-fighting Turks, the Bombay men proved themselves to be staunch and gallant troops, and their victory was worthy of the best traditions of the old Bombay Army.

Having repulsed the Turks on the west, General Nixon turned his attention to the east, cleared them out of Ahwaz and so secured the oil-pipe line. He then made a bold move to 'Amara, a modern town next in size to Baghdad, situated 200 miles up the Tigris. He was inadequately supplied with transport for such a move, for though the Mesopotamian force had been increased there had been no corresponding increase in the river transport. But the capture of 'Amara was of consequence politically because it was the seat of the Turkish provincial administration. Moreover, its occupation would have important military results because the Turkish division driven out of Ahwaz would have their retreat cut off. But before 'Amara could be occupied the Turkish troops had to be cleared out of their positions astride the Tigris just north of Qurna. On both banks of the river the ground was flooded here for miles, and the Turkish positions lay on the low hills which stood up like islands out of the floods. To attack them a large flotilla had to be collected of every kind, sort, and description of native river-craft, and the amphibious attack delivered on May 31st was known in the force as 'Townshend's





THE EUPHRATES AT NASIRIYA, 1916



A STREET IN NASIRIYA, 1916



THE EUPHRATES ABOVE NASIRIYA, 1916

Regatta', General Townshend being in charge of the advance. It was a fine piece of organization and met with complete success. But Townshend's pursuit was even more remarkable. Pressing on up the Tigris with a miscellaneous collection of gun-boats, steam launches, and river steamers he soon outdistanced all the larger craft and arrived at 'Amara on June 3rd with some of the smaller vessels. From them he could collect no more than fifty officers and men to occupy a town of twelve thousand inhabitants, capture several hundreds of prisoners, and beat off the Turkish division retiring from Ahwaz, from which quarter it had been dislodged by a force under General Gorringe, the commander of the 12th Division. A few shells from an armed launch sufficed to make the Turks turn aside, and next morning the arrival of a river steamer with a battalion of infantry made the position secure. 'Amara, a town of considerable importance, had been secured, and Nixon's move had completely fulfilled its object.

Next he turned his attention to the Turks at Nasiriya on the Euphrates. There also he was successful. After considerable difficulties over transport and some really hard fighting in terribly hot weather, General Gorringe stormed the Turkish position and captured the garrison with 17 guns and a great quantity of war material on July 25th. Ahwaz, 'Amara, Nasiriya—right, centre, and left—were all three captured. The Turkish civil administration was wiped out. The military forces were smashed.

But once again a successful advance involved a yet further advance. By occupying Kut al Imara, a position of great strategic importance at the junction of the Tigris and the Shatt al Hai, we could consolidate our military position, cover both 'Amara and Nasiriya against a Turkish counter-stroke, concentrate our forces, and threaten Baghdad. General Nixon therefore proposed the advance, the authorities in India concurred, those at Whitehall sanctioned it, and accordingly General Townshend was ordered to carry it out. It was asking a great deal of the troops. The heat was frightful. Fever, malaria, diseases of various kinds became fearfully prevalent, and the medical arrangements were already barely adequate for the work that had to be done. In spite of this, however, and in spite of the inadequacy of the transport, General Townshend began his advance on September 1st. Kut is

about 150 miles from 'Amara and nearly 300 miles from Basra but with his usual skill and audacity Townshend successfully carried out the move. The Turks were strongly posted astride the Tigris 7 miles below Kut and offered a stubborn resistance when attacked on September 28th. It was the biggest battle of the campaign, but the attackers were completely successful and on September 29th Kut was occupied.

So far so good. But now arose the question whether a still further advance—to Baghdad itself—should be made. In sanctioning this last advance the authorities both at Simla and at Whitehall had expressly limited it to the occupation of Kut, and had refused to contemplate General Nixon's proposal of an advance to Baghdad or even General Townshend's suggestion that in the event of success he might be able to repeat the brilliant stroke by which he had followed up his victory at Qurna in May, that he might perhaps rush Baghdad as he had rushed 'Amara. But an advance to Baghdad, another 150 miles or more by river from Kut, was a far more difficult and risky business even than the advance from 'Amara to Kut. Already the strain on the transport was fully as great as it could possibly stand, and, brilliantly as the troops had fought in the capture of the Turkish lines, there were limits to their capacity for conquest. Both General Townshend and General Nixon were of opinion that a further advance should be made, but only provided that the forces in Mesopotamia were largely increased. With the present forces Baghdad might be captured but not held. The Home Government were impressed with the great political and military advantages of an occupation of Baghdad. Prospects in Gallipoli were uncertain, and it seemed likely that the Germans would break through to Constantinople. Government had need therefore of a great and striking success in the East. They did not wish the advance to be made with insufficient forces and would make every effort to supply the necessary troops. But they wanted the advance made. The Viceroy of India thought the right policy was to take the risk and occupy Baghdad without delay, and the Secretary of State for India telegraphed on October 23rd that if Nixon thought that the force he had was sufficient he might march on Baghdad.

For this enterprise General Townshend had only about 11,000 effective men, as his division, the 6th, was worn down



by the excessive hardships they had had to endure. British and Indian units alike were below strength and had received insufficient drafts to replace their casualties.<sup>1</sup> General Nixon was not in a position to reinforce him, for the entire force in Mesopotamia at this time did not exceed 25,000 men, and these were scattered over a vast extent of country. The march from Kut to Baghdad, 100 miles, would have to be made on foot, for the water transport would not suffice for more than the carriage of supplies. Moreover, information came in that the enemy was strongly posted behind a double line of defences at Ctesiphon, 16 miles from Baghdad. Townshend tells us that he protested against advancing with so inadequate a force against an enemy so strongly placed and who might be soon receiving heavy reinforcements, while he himself, owing to the deficiencies of transport, could not expect any additions to his force for a very long time. But when ordered to advance he advanced swiftly so as to forestall the enemy. He arrived at Ctesiphon on November 22nd and attacked at daybreak.

He came very near to complete and brilliant victory.<sup>2</sup> With fine impetuosity the British and Indian troops stormed the entrenched position, occupied the first line, made a break in the second, and were pressing on to capture the guns in rear when the situation was changed by the arrival of Turkish reinforcements. It was a hard blow for the British. For the Turks in gradually augmenting numbers pressed them out of the second line and they had to content themselves with holding the first line. Here Townshend remained for the night and the three following days, gradually evacuating his wounded down the river. Then, finding that the enemy was being still further reinforced while his own transport, being fully occupied with the wounded, could not bring up supplies, he had reluctantly to retire.

This retirement was carried out with the utmost skill. On the night of November 25th Townshend left Ctesiphon, just evading an attack in force which the Turks had planned and which they attempted to put into operation a few hours too late. By daring use of his cavalry the British general

<sup>1</sup> 1,500 British on their way to Mesopotamia had been diverted to fill the gaps in the 10th (Irish) Division ordered from Gallipoli to Salonika.

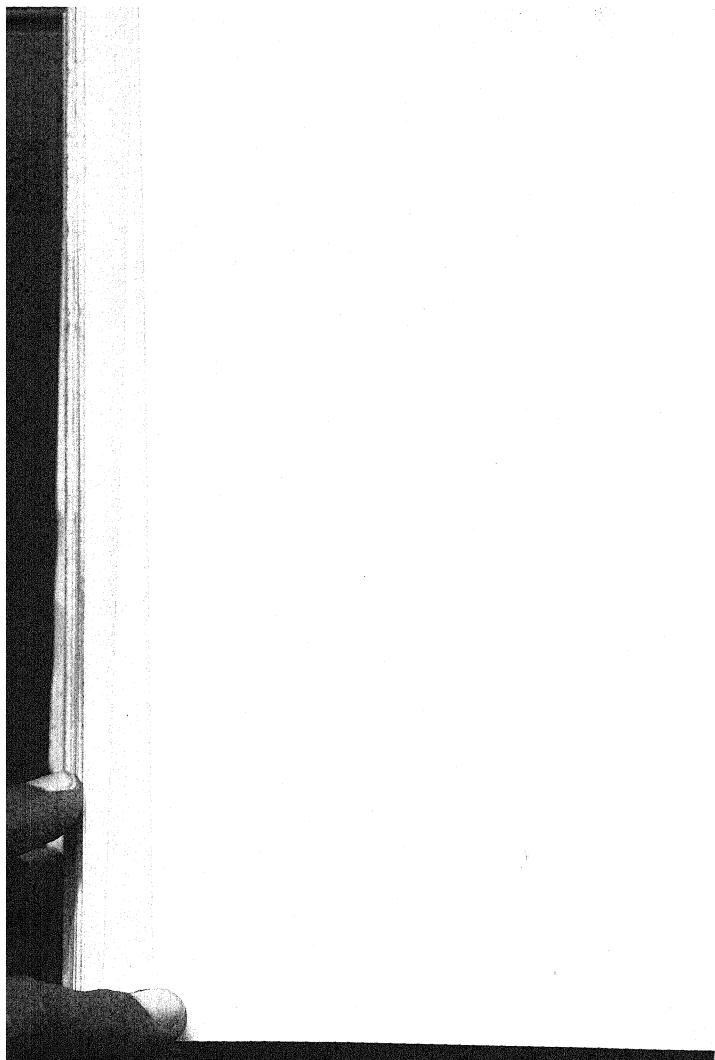
<sup>2</sup> The loss of his only aeroplane together with the information which its observer had collected was a fatal misfortune.

was able to fend off the enemy while he withdrew his tired forces, reduced by 4,500 men from the numbers with which he had set out. Owing to difficulties in navigation the supply and transport barges were delayed, an enforced halt had to be made which enabled the Turks to catch up the retreating force, and on December 1st Townshend found himself compelled to give battle at Umm at Tubul, very roughly half-way between Ctesiphon and Kut, in order to secure his further retreat. The Turks attacked in great strength, attempting to turn his right in addition to attacking him in front. But the frontal attack was enfladed by British gunboat fire from the river, as well as pounded by the artillery fire which Townshend concentrated on it, and was broken up, while the flanking force was charged by the British and Indian cavalry and thrown into confusion. Townshend though outnumbered had beaten off the attack, and before the enemy had time to rally for a further attack had recommenced his retreat. On December 3rd he had by his coolness, resourcefulness, and courage completed one of the most difficult operations in warfare and brought his force safely into Kut. He had also given the enemy such a shaking that they were unable to invest Kut immediately, and he had a few days in hand in which he could send his wounded downstream.

Here at Kut Townshend had expected to be invested, but he had expected also to be relieved within a comparatively short time. He was unaware how badly for the time being the British were faring in other parts. The attacks in Gallipoli, though they had done great service in destroying the flower of the Turkish Army, had failed to open the Dardanelles. The Gallipoli peninsula had to be evacuated, and large numbers of Turkish troops were consequently set free for service in Mesopotamia. British reinforcements were being sent to Mesopotamia, but the opening of the Salonika operations had gravely complicated the transport arrangements and had seriously delayed the movement of the Indian Corps from France. Moreover, the transport arrangements in Mesopotamia were wholly inadequate. No sufficient attention even now had been paid to them, the requisite type of craft were hard to find, took time to build and to send out to the East, and it was impossible to push the sorely needed reinforcements up the Tigris even when they reached Basra.



SIR CHARLES TOWNSHEND



Townshend, however, was still full of resource and fight. Through all the retreat he had kept his force well in hand. He had preserved that strong firm discipline which is absolutely essential in such conditions; and through all trials and adversities he had retained the confidence of his troops.

The enemy had given him a week's respite before attacking. On December 10th the Turks made their first attempt to take Kut by storm. Five times that day did they assault the little town and five times were they thrown back. Next day under cover of a heavy artillery fire they made a mass attack, which to all appearances should have succeeded. But this also failed. Thereafter they fell back upon their batteries and upon rifle fire till December 24th, when, having received reinforcements, they commenced a great bombardment and succeeded in making a breach in the defences. At the breach a column of some 6,000 infantry was hurled. The British had wired the breach, but the Turks by weight of numbers bore down the wiring and pressed forward, only, however, to find an inner line of defence. They tried again and again to carry this line but never succeeded. After losing 2,000 men they had to call off the attack, and never again did they attempt to carry Kut by assault.

Meanwhile reinforcements for the British Army were arriving in Mesopotamia. By this time the military situation in India had much improved; even the 'second line' Territorial battalions had had a year's training and were fit for any service, and it proved possible to produce three additional brigades, numbered 34th, 35th, and 36th, for service in Mesopotamia. The Territorials provided the British battalions and the attached artillery, and the assistance given by Nepal in the shape of a contingent of several battalions set free the Indian units. These brigades, which began reaching Basra early in December, were originally intended to have been withdrawn when the Lahore and Meerut Divisions arrived, but this plan was never carried out. Of these brigades, the 34th was sent up the Euphrates to reinforce Nasirya, and the 35th and 36th took part in the operations for the relief of Kut. Owing to the lack of transport, however, the newcomers were obliged to spend week after week in inactivity at Basra. Sir John Nixon had resigned owing to ill-health and had been succeeded by Sir Percy Lake, under whom was General Aylmer, now com-

missioned to lead a force for the relief of Kut. The troops had to be pushed up the river, more or less as they arrived, irrespective of their normal units, and improvised formations added to the difficulties of commanding officers. The relieving column reached 'Ali Gharbi on Christmas Day, but owing to transport difficulties was not able to attack, and while transport was being collected further Turkish reinforcements arrived, and the winter rain fell, turning the vast swamps into shallow lakes and rendering the country almost impassable. Nevertheless Aylmer attacked under the impression which prevailed outside Kut that the garrison was in greater straits for food than was at this date actually the case. Had more time been given for organizing the operations, had more powerful artillery been available and accurate aeroplane reconnaissance of the Turkish positions been possible, the effort might well have succeeded. As it was, attacking on both banks of the Tigris from January 6th to 9th, Aylmer fought an action at Shaikh Sa'ad, when the Turks fell back after a reputed loss of 4,500 men, and on the 13th he took the enemy's position at Orah, but with heavy loss. The Turks then retired on the Umm al Hanna position 15 miles below Kut. This position consisted of five lines of trenches, each 280 yards behind the other, and had the Tigris on one side and a flooded swamp on the other. It should only have been attacked after previous heavy bombardment. But Aylmer felt bound to attack though he had not the guns or the ammunition for a proper bombardment, nor aeroplanes to reconnoitre. Consequently when he attacked, on January 21st, 1916, he was unable to break through. He suffered a loss of 2,741 men and was brought to a halt.

The question now was how long could Kut hold out. After Aylmer's failure at Hanna, Townshend on the 24th of January reduced the rations of bread and meat by a half. The town was ransacked for supplies, and much hidden grain was discovered. Corn was economized, partly by serving out dried potato meal and partly by mixing the bread ration with barley meal and atta, and partly by slaughtering the battery bullocks and horses.

On March 8th to 9th, the whole of the Lahore and Meerut Divisions having by this time come up, Aylmer made yet another great attempt to relieve Kut. This time he attacked on the right bank of the Tigris on what was called the Es Sinn

position. A long night march was made across the desert. But the troops had arrived late at the rendezvous, and they came into position after daybreak in a fatigued sleepy state. Nevertheless the Turks were surprised, and had the attack been at once pressed home victory would have been in sight. Unfortunately, delay while the position was being bombarded gave the enemy time to bring up reinforcements, and they were able to put up a strong resistance when at last the attack was made. The British, fighting with determination, gained a footing in the centre of the position threatening the Dujaila redoubt, but the enemy showed no signs of retiring and, looking to the weariness of the troops and the want of water, Aylmer abandoned the attack at nightfall.

The Turks now called upon Townshend to surrender. He simply refused and still further reduced the rations. The enemy on their side pressed both their bombardment and air raids. By the beginning of April the supplies of grain at length failed, and the garrison fed itself on horse meat.

Meanwhile a fresh effort at relief was being organized. Some additional Territorial battalions, chiefly cyclists, had been sent out to India together with some Garrison Battalions, and nearly a dozen Indian units which had been on service in France or Egypt had returned home. It thus became possible to organize in India yet another three brigades, numbered 41st, 42nd, and 43rd, and to dispatch them to Mesopotamia, while the 13th Division under General Maude was sent thither from Egypt, to which it had moved from Gallipoli where it had already co-operated with Indian troops on the slopes of Sari Bair.

On April 5th the roar of guns led the hard-pressed garrison to hope that at the eleventh hour relief might yet come. A third attempt to relieve them was being made, General Goringe being now in command of the relieving force. The enemy's position at Sanniyat was being attacked by the 13th Division. The British advance was made on both sides of the river. The enemy were turned out of the Hanna maze of trenches, and on the morning of April 6th the 7th—the Meerut—Division attacked the Sanniyat position itself. This position was even stronger than those already taken, and the Meerut Division, despite heavy losses, could do no more than establish itself some way short of the trenches. To make

matters worse the Tigris broke its banks and overflowed most of the ground, and for the next two days the floods prevented further action. On the 9th the assault was resumed by the 13th Division, but though it carried the first line of defences it could get no farther nor even retain its gains. An effort was now made on the right bank of the Tigris, where the Turkish front line was 4 miles west of Sanniyat. On April 17th the enemy were pressed back for some distance and lost heavily in a furious counter-attack on the Lahore Division, but here also floods impeded progress and no breakthrough could be achieved. At Sanniyat too the enemy still held on, repulsing a last attack in which some of the Meerut Division did for a time effect a lodgement in the front trenches, and it was clear that it was impossible to reach Kut.

Some amount of flour was sent into Kut by aeroplane, and an attempt was made by the *Julnar*, one of the fast steamers of the flotilla, to break through the Turkish lines with provisions. But the ship was wrecked, and on April 26th Townshend was ordered to make terms with the Turks. The only terms the Turks would accept were unconditional surrender. Townshend had made his preparations for surrender by blowing up his guns, smashing his rifles, and dumping ammunition into the river at night, and on April 29th, after maintaining the defence for 147 days, he surrendered.

The story of Kut is a tragic page in the history of the Empire at War and of the Indian Army in particular. There was gallantry and devotion and tenacity in the defence, there was all this in the attempts at relief. It was not for want of courage and self-sacrifice that the Lahore and Meerut Divisions and their comrades failed to get through. There may have been tactical errors, the Tigris may have played a part in the operations which was beyond human power to control or combat, there may certainly have been insufficient appreciation and knowledge outside of the situation inside, leading to hurry, confusion, premature efforts which were therefore unsuccessful. But the root of the failure was not tactical or even due to imperfect information. It was administrative: it lay perhaps even more in the failure to let policy be guided by considerations of a practical nature. The inadequacy of the transport services has been laid bare in the Report of the Mesopotamia Commission. It was due in large measure to imperfect appre-



ciation of the conditions prevailing in Mesopotamia and the special difficulties of the country. The break-down of the medical arrangements, the saddest feature of the whole grim story, was in the main a matter of transport. Inasmuch as at this time the operations in Mesopotamia were still being administered by India, the Indian administration must be admitted to have broken down under a task for which it must also be admitted it had never been organized. But the medical break-down, the inadequacy of the transport, the consequent confusion and muddle at the front which led to troops being thrown into action regardless of their proper organization and formations, come back in the long run to the way in which one step led to others not previously contemplated, to the impossibility of limiting commitments, to the need for anticipating the consequences of action and for the competent study of problems and policies prior to decisions.

The surrender at an earlier stage would have disastrously affected British prestige throughout Asia. As it was, the gallantry, skill, and dogged determination of the defence had largely discounted the evil results of an eventual surrender. Moreover strong and important bodies of the enemy had been kept for four months tied down to an enterprise which brought them very little benefit even when successful and which prevented their carrying on operations elsewhere which might have been more fruitful of enduring results. The failure too did not take the world by surprise; those who were watching the twin struggle against the Turk and the Tigris and against starvation could have had but little hope for weeks before Kut fell. The determination both of the defence and of the would-be relievers may well have helped to inspire confidence in India and elsewhere that in the long run we should make good.

With the necessity for relieving Kut no longer existing, the British could pause, collect themselves together, take stock of the whole situation, and deliberately mature plans for the future conduct of the war in Mesopotamia. One chief result of this deliberation was the appointment of the commander of the 13th Division, Lieutenant-General Sir Stanley Maude, to the chief command. Sir Stanley had served in the Coldstream Guards and earned distinction both as a staff officer

and brigadier in France and as commander of a division during the later stages of the Gallipoli campaign. At the head of that division he had done fine work already in Mesopotamia ; if his men had failed to get through to Kut they had achieved some striking successes, and it was the Tigris even more than the Turk which had beaten them. He had made the division and inspired it with a fine fighting spirit. He was conspicuous for two unlike but complementary qualities—for daring and for meticulous attention to detail. He could conceive the bold general outlines of a plan and show great daring in execution. Yet he could be exceedingly careful over every detail in its preparation. Of almost equal importance was it that the control of the operations was now taken over by the General Staff at the War Office, where General Sir William Robertson was in charge. India henceforward supplied large quantities of stores and supplies and much of the man-power, but the military policy to be followed passed out of the hands of the Government of India.

Sir Stanley Maude took over command in Mesopotamia on August 28th, 1916, and had at once to decide whether he would remain on the defensive or assume the offensive. The Turks and their German tutors, elated over the capture of Kut, were contemplating nothing less than an advance on India. Between Turkey and India stood Persia and Afghanistan—both Mohammedan countries whom it might be easy to win over. Persia in any case was weak and could offer small resistance. Afghanistan was strong and if hostile might be troublesome. On the other hand, if favourable she might be of great help, and German and Turkish agents had gone thither to sound the Amir and secure him if possible for the Germans and the Turks.

The enemy's plans appeared at this time to be to contain the British forces in Mesopotamia and threaten them by an attack down the Euphrates, while the main advance was made through Persia towards India. It was an inspiring project and might have materialized into something very dangerous to our Indian Empire if it had not been met by a blow which at once shivered the whole grandiose scheme to pieces. Maude saw clearly and immediately that the way to defend was to attack, that the way to preserve India was to assail Baghdad. Success in that venture would moreover go

far to re-establish British prestige, to impress the Amir and the frontier tribes, and to assist General Murray's operations in Sinai. If he stood on the defensive he would have to scatter his forces to guard against attack at many points. If he attacked he could concentrate his forces, for he would compel the enemy to meet his assault.

To attack Baghdad Maude therefore at once prepared. His predecessor, Sir Percy Lake, had done much since the fall of Kut to improve the port of Basra, together with the service on the lines of communication, and to develop the resources of the country so as to be able to get as much as possible from it. But a very great deal yet had to be done before the army would be in a position to assault the enemy's immensely strong positions in front of Kut and to advance on Baghdad.

In the first place the health of the troops had to be restored after the fearful heat of a Mesopotamian summer. Until they had recovered from the exhaustion which such heat causes they could not possibly respond to the calls which would have to be made upon them. Then all the arrangements for the supply of food, munitions and stores, and for care of the sick and wounded, had to be perfected. Three classes of transport were being employed—river, rail, and road; and on the road were employed both motor and animal transport. The Directorate of Inland Water Transport was strengthened by accessions of men and material from overseas, as well as by additional river-craft. Night and day an endless chain of river-craft passed up and down the river, thereby assuring the maintenance of the troops at the front. Then a light railway was constructed up from Qurna to 'Amara and another line laid from Shaikh Sa'ad up to the front. An efficient motor transport service was also organized. These preparations went ceaselessly forward, and drafts from England and from India brought the shattered units up to strength. A steady stream of reinforcements kept moving up the Tigris.<sup>1</sup> All the

<sup>1</sup> Many tired units were sent back to India and replaced by fresh battalions. Several of the units taken at Kut were re-formed on the Lines of Communication and the whole force was reorganized. The 6th and 12th Indian Divisions were broken up, two new divisions being formed, a 14th on the Tigris line, a 15th on the Euphrates. The force on the Tigris was divided into two corps, the 1st under Lieutenant-General Sir A. S. Cobbe, V.C., consisting of the Lahore and Meerut Divisions, the II<sup>nd</sup> under Lieutenant-General W. R. Marshall, who had till then been commanding a division at Salonika, including Maude's old 13th Division and the newly formed 14th Indian Division.

necessities of an army about to assume the offensive were accumulated at the front, and by the beginning of December the general concentration up stream at Shaikh Sa'ad was completed.

The Turks still occupied the same positions on the Tigris. On the left bank they held the Sanniyat position, where they had withstood three assaults in April and which they had further strengthened. They had also constructed successive positions between Sanniyat and Kut, 15 miles in rear; and had entrenched the river bank between those two places. With the river on one flank and the great marsh on the other these positions were immensely strong. On the right bank of the Tigris the Turks held a line beginning 3 miles north-east of Kut, that is, considerably up stream from Sanniyat. From that point the line ran south-west across the Khudhaira Bend to the river Hai, the line of which was occupied for several miles with posts and Arab mounted auxiliaries.

The weak point in the enemy's position was that his communications were peculiarly open to attack once we had established ourselves on the Hai. The marsh secured his left flank but it also prevented him working round that flank to strike at Maude's communications; and to resist an attack from the Hai upon the British communications the British troops were well placed. Maude therefore, feeling no anxiety as to his flanks, determined to capture the Hai position, and then, crossing the Tigris, to attack the Turkish line of communications and compel them thereby to withdraw from the powerful Sanniyat position.

But the enemy were to be led to suppose that, as before, an attack on Sanniyat was our real object. The 1st Corps under Lieutenant-General Sir Alexander Cobbe therefore began bombarding this position on the morning of the 13th December 1916. Having thus attracted the enemy's attention to that flank, Lieutenant-General Marshall's IIIrd Corps and the Cavalry Division were during the night of the 13th-14th dispatched across the desert on the right bank of the Tigris to the Hai. The enemy was taken by surprise. The British were able to cross the Hai at two points and during the remainder of December extend their pressure northward and westward. Our position was then consolidated. Roads were built, and the light railway from Shaikh Sa'ad extended towards the Hai. By this successful move Maude directly threatened the

enemy's line of communications and rendered Nasariya safe from attack.

Still the enemy were not yet cleared from the right bank of the Tigris, and from their position in the Khudhaira Bend, east of Kut, threatened our line of communications, for at high flood they could inundate portions of it. Maude therefore decided to clear the bend, and entrusted the conduct of the operations to General Cobbe. The attack began on the 5th January 1917, the Lahore Division being principally engaged, and severe fighting took place till the 19th. The Turks were in a strong position and fought stubbornly. They held a well-prepared line some 2,600 yards long, facing east. The ground in front was flat and bare. 'At the southern end, 200 yards from the river and parallel to it, was a double row of sand-hills, on which the enemy had constructed a strong point with covered-in machine gun emplacements. The front of the position was swept by fire from both flanks from the left bank of the river. There was a second line in the rear, at distances varying from 500 to 1,000 yards from the front line, whilst between the two were trenches and nullahs prepared for defence. The southern portion of the second line, and some sand-hills 400 yards behind it, formed a last position, and the garrison had communication with the left bank by means of ferries, which, owing to the conformation of the river bend, were protected from direct rifle and machine gun fire so long as this retired position was held.'

Against such formidable lines of defence our troops could only make progress by slow degrees. Approach was made by sapping. Some 25,000 yards of trenches were dug under trying conditions of rain and exposure to enfilade and direct fire. On the 7th and 8th bombardments were carried out, and on the 9th an assault was made on the southern end of the Turkish line. Six hundred yards of the line were captured without much initial loss; but a thick mist hindered artillery support and facilitated a counter-attack. Some hand-to-hand fighting followed, but the 1/1st Gurkhas and 105th Mahrattas on the left succeeded in reaching the river bend and in inflicting heavy losses upon the enemy. On the right also our troops gained ground, and the Manchesters, a Frontier Rifle Regiment—the 59th—and a detachment of Sikh Pioneers—the 34th—beat off a Turkish counter-attack.

We resumed our attack on the 10th and pressed the enemy back trench by trench to his last position. This we attacked, but without success, on the 11th, and a pause became necessary. The ground in front of our troops was open and was commanded from both flanks at close quarters. Covered approaches and trenches in which to assemble the troops prior to assault had to be constructed. The forward trench system was completed by the 17th, and one by one the enemy's advanced posts were captured. On the night of the 17th/18th we took and lost the last remaining redoubt which enfiladed the attack. On the 18th we took it again and held it. We were preparing for a final assault on the 19th when the enemy during the night of the 18th/19th retired across the river.

The fighting throughout had been very severe and mainly hand-to-hand. The success attained was due very largely to the gallantry of the troops. As General Maude wrote: 'The Turks are very stubborn fighters, especially in trenches, but our men fairly beat them at their own game and with bomb and bayonet drove them steadily back, foot by foot.' But the success was also due in part to the fact that Maude was at the same time raiding the enemy's position at Sanniyat and threatening him on the Hai, so that the Turks were never quite certain where the real attack was being made.

This threat at the Hai salient was afterwards turned into a serious attack and carried out by Lieutenant-General Marshall. From the 11th of January he set to work constructing trenches reaching out towards the extensive trench system which the Turks held astride the Hai river near its junction with the Tigris until his trenches were within 400 yards of the enemy's front line. On the 25th he attacked, and from that day till the 4th of February, when the enemy was finally cleared off the eastern bank of the Hai, continual hard hand-to-hand fighting took place. The Turks counter-attacked incessantly, and it was only through the splendid fighting quality of the infantry, seconded by the bold support rendered by the artillery, and by ceaseless work carried out by the Royal Flying Corps, that success was achieved and the enemy finally driven across the river. It had been General Maude's intention to launch the cavalry against the enemy's rear, but a heavy thunderstorm burst over the district, flooding the Marsh of Jassan and rendering progress impossible.

General Marshall was then directed to attack the Dahra Bend, which was above Kut, and the capture of which would threaten the Turkish line of retreat. It was a horse-shoe bend bristling with trenches and commanded from across the river on three sides by hostile batteries and machine guns. By the exercise of great skill in hiding his real intentions and making the enemy believe he meant to attack on their left, whereas his true attack was in the centre, he was able, by the 16th of February, to clear the bend of the enemy, inflicting heavy casualties and capturing some 2,000 prisoners. In this attack the 102nd Bombay Grenadiers<sup>1</sup> especially distinguished themselves, capturing an important position by assault across the open and retaining it in face of two strong counter-attacks.

The enemy had now, after two months of strenuous fighting, been driven entirely from the right bank of the Tigris in the neighbourhood of Kut. General Maude held the river bank on one side, the Turks retained their position on the other. They also still retained the extremely strong Sanniyat position. But Maude's generalship was beginning to tell. If he could cross the river he would cut their communications and make their whole position untenable. And he could keep them in constant doubt as to whether he would make his main attack at Sanniyat or at some point on the river and, if the latter, what point.

During Marshall's attack on Dahra Bend, Cobbe maintained constant activity along the Sanniyat front, and as soon as the bend was cleared Maude ordered him to attack Sanniyat. This attack, carried out on the 17th of February, was only partially successful, but it served its purpose of attracting the enemy's attention to the Sanniyat front. Further attacks on Sanniyat followed, daily artillery barrages were carried out, and feints for crossing the river near Kut were made with the result that the enemy moved infantry and guns into the Kut peninsula—a position from which they could not afterwards be retransferred to the actual point of crossing in time to be of any use. In the meanwhile secret preparations were made by Maude for crossing the Tigris as far west as possible, that is about Shumran. Positions for guns and

<sup>1</sup> The 102nd Bombay Grenadiers are one of the oldest Indian regiments.

machine guns to support the crossing were selected, approaches were made, and crews were trained to man the pontoons.

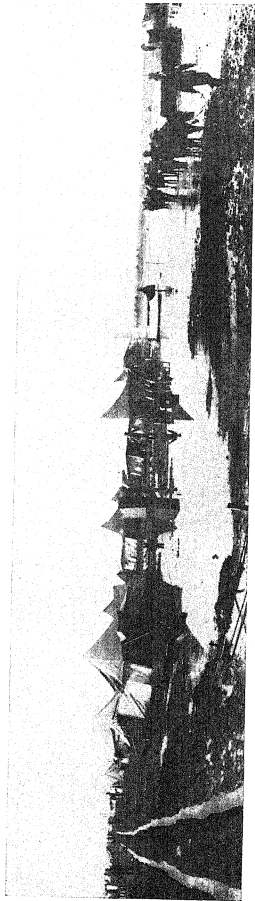
Just before daybreak on the 23rd of February Maude made his fateful stroke. The 2nd Norfolks,<sup>1</sup> crossing by a ferry immediately below where the bridge was to be thrown, caught the enemy completely by surprise. Two battalions of Gurkhas, the 1/2nd and 2/9th, ferrying across a little lower down, were met by a staggering fire but landed and made good. Our artillery vigorously engaged the enemy, and the construction of the bridge at the point selected—the south end of the Shumran Bend—was begun. At 4.30 p.m. it was ready for traffic; and by nightfall our troops 'had secured a position 2,000 yards in depth, covering the bridgehead, while ahead of this line our patrols were acting vigorously against the enemy's advanced detachments'. The infantry of one division, the 14th Indian Division, was across, and another, the 13th, was ready to follow. A fatal blow had been struck from which the enemy could not possibly recover.

Early on the 24th our troops resumed the advance. Our cavalry, artillery, and another division crossed the bridge. The enemy put up a very stubborn resistance, but it was the resistance of the rear-guard only and the main body was in full retreat. The attack at Shumran had had its effect at Sanniyat also. While the crossing was proceeding on the 23rd Cobbe had attacked and secured the third and fourth lines, and on the following day he cleared the enemy out of the remainder of a position which the Turks had thought to be impregnable. The final capture fell to the Meerut Division which had suffered such heavy losses at this point in 1916.

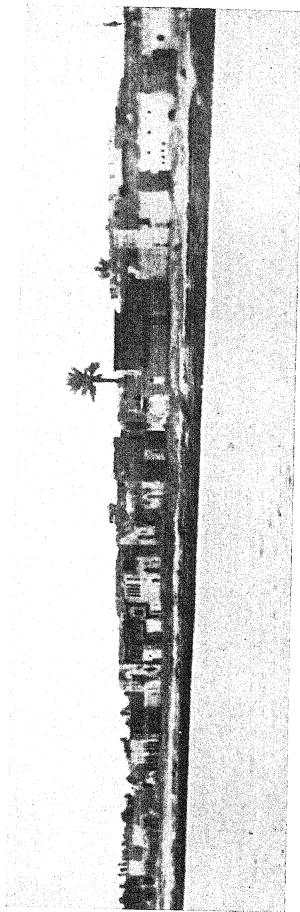
The Turkish rear-guards retired during the night of the 24th, and on the 25th Marshall and the cavalry moved north-west. Eight miles from Shumran the Turks had entrenched themselves and offered fight, but after a severe struggle they were evicted. By abandoning immense quantities of equipment, ammunition, rifles, vehicles, and stores of all kinds they were able to continue their flight to Baghdad. But our gunboat flotilla managed to inflict heavy losses on the retreating columns.

<sup>1</sup> This battalion, whose feat was perhaps the finest individual exploit of the campaign, had been one of Townshend's old 6th Division and had been re-formed since the fall of Kut.

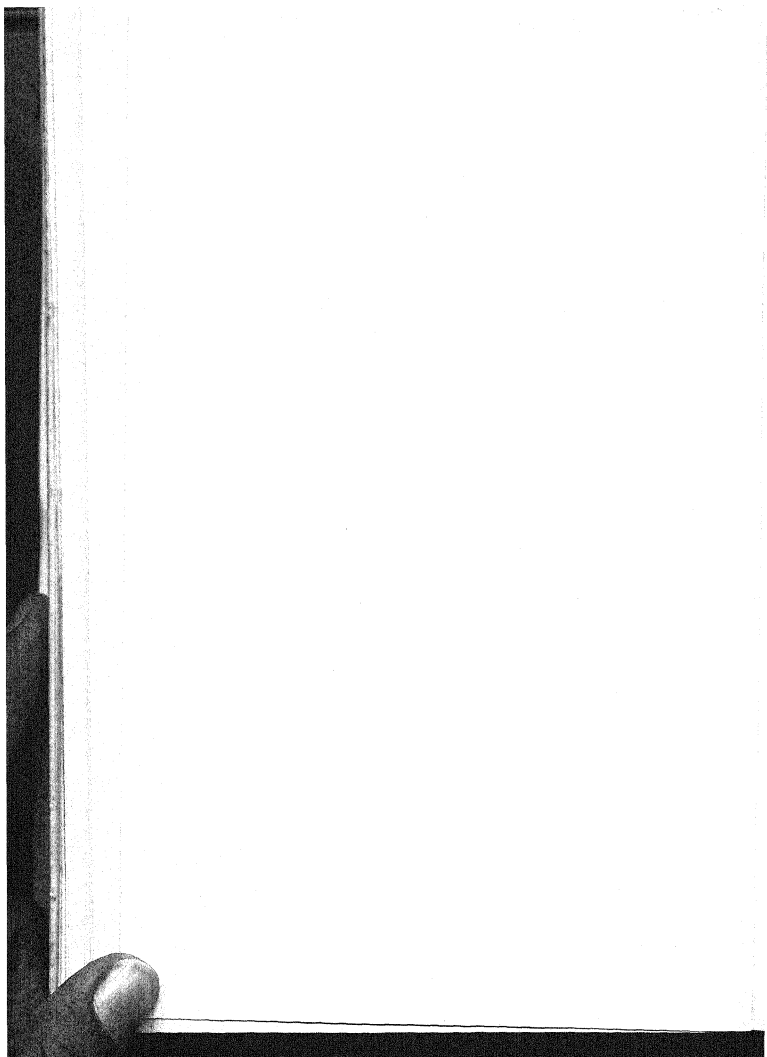




CAMP AT ARAB VILLAGE, 1916



KUT AT THE TIME OF ITS RECAPTURE, 1917



Maude had to pause for some days to organize his advance on Baghdad itself. But there was no intention of pausing a day longer than could be helped, and on the 5th of March, supplies having been brought up, the advance was resumed. The strongly entrenched Ctesiphon position, which the enemy would have held but for our rapid advance, was found unoccupied. On the 7th our advance-guard came in contact with the enemy on the line of the Diyala river. This position was turned by throwing a bridge across the Tigris, from the far bank of which it was possible to enfilade the Turks. This helped Marshall to cross the Diyala in face of stubborn opposition on the 10th and drive the enemy from their last important position before Baghdad.

In the meanwhile the cavalry, followed by a portion of Cobbe's Corps, had proceeded along the right bank of the Tigris and driven the enemy from their position at Shawa Khan. Our troops suffered greatly from want of water; and dust-storms rendered reconnaissance and co-ordination almost impossible. But following the Decauville Railway as a guide we occupied Baghdad railway station at 5.55 a.m. on the 11th of March; and on the same morning Marshall advanced rapidly on Baghdad and entered the city.

By the capture of Baghdad a blow was struck at the Turks which wiped out their triumph at Kut, and shattered to pieces the German dream of an attack on India. The news of the victory served greatly to restore British prestige in the East and to hearten people in the homeland; they could see that in Maude they possessed a fighting general of real military genius. Sound strategy, careful and systematic preparation, excellent and effective organization, skilful tactics combined with determination and hard fighting on the part of the troops, had combined to achieve a success as important as it was dramatic.

By the end of March 1917 British columns had driven the enemy north-east, north, and west in divergent directions along the Diyala, Tigris, and Euphrates respectively, and advanced troops had established a screen covering Baghdad. In the course of these operations more than one sharp action had taken place and several useful successes were won, notably by General Cobbe at Mushahida on March 14th. But it was still necessary, in order to consolidate our position and

secure Baghdad, which was an open city devoid of means of defence, to prosecute operations against the shattered but reinforced XVIIIth Turkish Corps with which Maude had been so recently engaged, whilst keeping watch on the XIIIth Corps which was falling back from Ba'quba before the Russians.

On April 2nd the British, after some sharp fighting extending over a fortnight, effected a junction with the Russian General Baratoff's troops about Qizil Ribat, and when the Russians were well established on the line of the Diyala, Maude was able to resume operations along both banks of the Tigris. On the 8th he attacked and defeated an enemy's force of about 4,000 rifles with 200 sabres and 16 guns at Balad Station, and on the 9th General Cobbe occupied Harbe. A sudden advance of the Turkish XIIIth Corps against General Marshall's troops on the left bank of the Tigris was defeated on April 11th, and the enemy were pushed back into the Jabal Hamrin on the following days.

Maude then turned his attention to the detachment of the XVIIIth Turkish Corps holding the passage of the Shatt al 'Adhaim. The channel which our troops had to cross was narrow but full of quicksands which caused delay. In spite of this a bridge was thrown across on April 18th, our infantry cleared the loop of the river, and the Cavalry Brigade, skilfully handled and pushing resolutely on, notwithstanding the heat and want of water, succeeded in turning the enemy's retreat into a rout. Only a small fraction of the troops opposed to us effected their escape.

The enemy's opposition on the left bank having been completely broken, a further advance was now ordered on the right bank with the object of capturing Samarra. The Tigris was bridged at Sinija on April 19th and the river-head was moved up to that place. The enemy were holding a strong position covering Samarra and extending across the Baghdad-Samarra railway. The Dujail canal, diagonally situated across the line of the British advance, 'was a considerable obstacle, with banks 40 feet high in some places, and containing water 6 feet deep and 20 to 25 feet broad; and its banks had been prepared in places so as to bring enfilade fire to bear upon the ground south of it.' This strong position 'was held by some 6,700 rifles with 200 sabres and 31 guns, whilst in the vicinity of Samarra were reserves consisting of some 4,000 rifles with

500 sabres and 15 guns.' On April 21st the position on the north side of the canal was resolutely attacked by the Black Watch and 1/8th Gurkhas, and, after gaining the position, then losing it and subsequently regaining it, they were able finally to establish themselves in it. An attack by the Seaforths and 28th and 92nd Punjabis launched south of the canal was carried out with fine dash and gallantry across 2,000 yards of ground devoid of cover, and by 7.25 a.m. the enemy's front line, some 700 yards long, was in our hands. During the remainder of the day and the succeeding night the British consolidated their position, and on the next day the 28th Brigade pushed forward to continue the work. They, too, met with a most stubborn opposition, and it was only after a long day of fierce and strenuous fighting that the Leicesters, well backed up by the 51st and 53rd Sikhs and 56th Rifles, at last took the position. The Turks counter-attacked in force, but the 19th Brigade came up to support the hard-pressed 28th and checked the Turks, and then the 21st Brigade went through and, pushing on, found the enemy had gone right back. It had been a desperate fight and the losses were heavy, but the Turkish resistance was completely broken. By 10 a.m. on the 23rd Samarra Station was secured, while Samarra Town, on the left bank, was occupied on the 24th and a post established there, the enemy offering no further resistance but retreating on Tikrit.

'As a result of the fighting during the month of April the enemy's XIIIth and XVIIIth Corps had been driven back on divergent lines, the former into the Jabal Hamrin and the latter to Tikrit. The XIIIth Corps had twice taken the offensive with results disastrous to itself, and the XVIIIth Corps had been defeated and driven from its selected positions on four occasions. Our total captures for the month amounted to some 3,000 prisoners and 17 guns, besides a considerable quantity of rolling stock and booty of all kinds.' The objectives Maude had set out to reach had been secured, and the spirit of the enemy's troops was broken. The fighting had imposed a severe strain upon our men, for the heat, the constant dust-storms, and the occasional absence of water, tested their stamina very highly. But, says Maude, 'as conditions became more trying the spirit of the troops seemed to rise, and to the end of this period they maintained the same high standard of

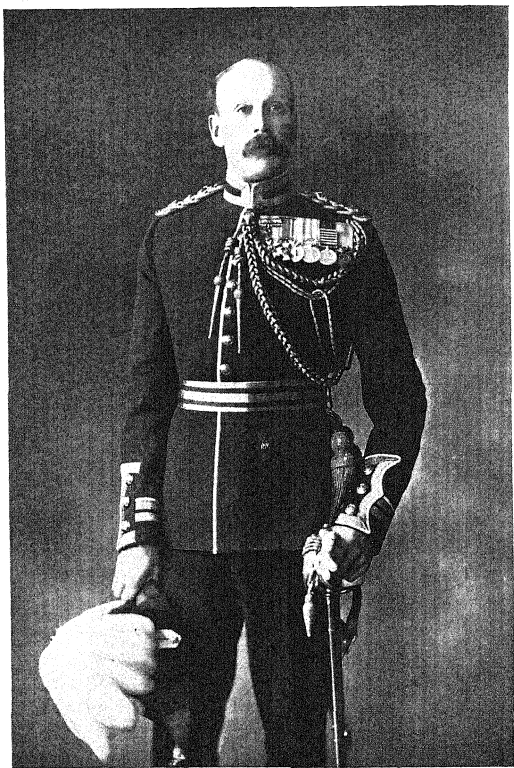
discipline, gallantry in action, and endurance which had been so noticeable throughout the Army during the operations which led up to the fall of Baghdad and subsequently.'

The increasing heat now necessitated the redistribution of the troops for the hot weather, and every provision possible under existing conditions had to be made to guard against the trying period which was rapidly approaching. Whilst it was necessary to hold the positions which had been so bravely won and to strengthen them defensively, the bulk of the troops were withdrawn into reserve and distributed in suitable camps along the river banks, where they could obtain the benefit of the breezes and a liberal supply of water for drinking, bathing, and washing.

During the latter part of June, July, and the beginning of August the heat was intense, and an attempt to advance on the line of the Euphrates had in consequence to be abandoned. Movements could not be undertaken by either side without grave risk of incurring substantial casualties from heat stroke and heat exhaustion. The troops enjoyed a well-earned rest but were by no means idle. Our hold over the area was made secure, defensive positions were prepared, and training was carried out. Manly sports, too, which are so essential to the well-being of the soldier, especially when temporarily inactive in the military sense, were freely indulged in with beneficial results to the health and future fitness of the Army. Arrangements were also made for a proportion of the troops to proceed to India on leave, and those who had been on service for a considerable time derived much benefit from the change and rest thus obtained.

With the arrival of rather cooler weather active operations could be resumed. In September the Turks on the Euphrates were attacked by Major-General Sir H. T. Brooking with the 15th Indian Division which had been brought up to the front from Nasiriya. On September 29th the enemy were defeated at Ramadi some miles above Al Falluja, and the whole Turkish force was surrounded and forced to surrender. At the beginning of October Lieutenant-General Marshall was directed to clear the left bank of the Diyala and occupy the Jabal Hamrin astride of that river in order that the control of the canals might be in our hands, and this he succeeded in doing early in October. The Turks in the middle of October showed signs of activity north of Samarra, but General Maude made a





SIR STANLEY MAUDE



surprise attack on them on November 2nd, and three days later the 1st Corps captured Tikrit after a hard fight against a well-posted Turkish rear-guard.

The Army of Mesopotamia had now to suffer an irreparable loss in the death, from cholera, on November 19th, of its brave and loved commander. General Maude by his genius had altered the whole face of affairs in Mesopotamia. He had taken over an army whose moral had been severely tried by their failure to relieve Kut, and whose health had been sapped by a very trying climate; but in a few months he had, says his successor General W. R. Marshall, by his hard work and great gifts of organization, clear-sightedness, and determination, and above all by his intense sympathy with and love of his soldiers, restored its fighting efficiency, reorganized the transport service, provided for the proper feeding of the troops, and made them as comfortable as circumstances would permit, yet never relaxed in training and discipline, so that when he at length moved forward his Force never looked back. Moreover, though an officer of the British Service with no experience of Indian troops, he won their confidence no less than that of his white troops. At his death the moral of the Army was magnificent, whilst organization and training had reached a high level of efficiency.

By the time of General Maude's death all the main objectives in Mesopotamia had been fully attained. But in the interests of the Palestine campaign it was essential to maintain continuous pressure on the Turks, and our soldiers were better employed in causing additional losses to the enemy and making further local gains than if they had remained inactive. Moreover, shortly before General Maude's death it had been found possible to organize an additional division, the 17th Indian, mainly out of troops hitherto employed on the line of communications, where the garrisons could now be safely reduced. General Monro's great expansion of the Indian Army was also beginning to make itself felt, and before the end of 1917 enough units were dispatched to Mesopotamia to form yet another division, the 18th Indian. These formations were not, however, intended to increase the force in Mesopotamia but to set free the Lahore and Meerut Divisions to reinforce General Allenby, as for the operations to be undertaken in Mesopotamia the force in the country was amply sufficient.

The moral of the Turkish forces was as low as the British was high, and desertions were frequent. Accordingly General Marshall at the beginning of December entrusted to Lieutenant-General Sir R. Egerton<sup>1</sup> the task of attacking that part of the XIIIth Turkish Corps which was holding the Diyala river above Al Mansuriya. The Turkish forces were driven from their positions, a bridge-head at Qizil Ribat was established, and on the 9th of December Khanaqin was occupied. Then early in 1918 came a move up the Euphrates, Major-General Sir H. T. Brooking was ordered to attack Hit, and on March 9th that town was occupied by the British. The retreating enemy were pursued; Ana was captured and over 5,000 prisoners with 12 guns and great quantities of ammunition. In this pursuit magnificent work was done by the 7th Cavalry Brigade under Brigadier-General R. A. Cassels, as well as by the light armoured motor batteries.

In addition to these direct military actions General Marshall now undertook the military occupation and civil control of the whole of the Euphrates line from Falluja to Nasiriya, and by these means encouraged and assisted the development of the rich agricultural lands in that area. Various villages were garrisoned, and through communication by river between Basra and Falluja was established. The development of the local resources throughout the lower Euphrates valley was thus controlled. Many hundred tons of seed grain were planted, and a branch line to Hilla was constructed to bring in the produce.

The British Commander was anxious to avoid arousing religious animosity, and had therefore refrained from occupying certain holy towns such as Karbala and An Najaf in this area. But the murder of the Political Officer of Najaf, Captain W. M. Marshall, made it necessary to take action against that town. It was found to be the centre of an active enemy intrigue designed to hamper us by such murders as this of the Political Officer. The town was therefore blockaded until the delinquents were handed over. All law-abiding persons were treated with fairness, and scrupulous care was taken to avoid damage to holy persons and places, but when the instigators of the crime were handed over they were tried, sentenced, and exe-

<sup>1</sup> One of the original brigadiers of the Indian Corps in France, he had succeeded General Marshall in command of the IIIrd Corps.

cuted, with the result that subsequently the area was quiet and orderly.

In order to make the line of communications with Persia more secure, General Marshall considered it advisable to drive the Turks out of the Qara Tepe-Kifri-Tuz Khurmatli area and to hold both Kifri and Tuz for the future. General Egerton was therefore directed again to advance in this direction towards the end of April. He succeeded in achieving his objects. Kifri was occupied unopposed on April 28th. Qara Tepe was abandoned by the Turks. The main position of the Turks at Aq Su was attacked on the 29th. The enemy offered a stout resistance, but the British infantry advanced under heavy artillery and machine-gun fire with the greatest rapidity and in the most perfect order. By 7 a.m. the position was carried and Lancashire men of the 13th Division, pressing on in pursuit, entered Tuz Khurmatli, capturing the major portion of the Turkish forces. Our principal object had thus been gained, but General Marshall determined to exploit our advantage still further and on May 7th Kirkuk was occupied.

In Western Persia at this time not only was there a state of famine but there was every prospect of a state of anarchy as well. General Marshall was constantly receiving urgent calls for help. The Persians had suffered greatly from both Turks and Russians, and naturally did not want yet another belligerent to enter their country. Yet they sorely needed help for famine and preservation against disorder. It was necessary also for the British to be on their guard against a Germano-Turkish advance through Persia towards Central Asia—towards Turkistan and Afghanistan. The Russians had by this time collapsed, and a Bolshevik Government inimical to the British was in power at Petrograd and Moscow. The enemy had therefore no longer to fear any attack from the Caucasus, and, unless the British took action to prevent it, might march straight through Persia to the borders of India.

What effective action the British could take it was not, however, easy to see. From rail-head on the Mesopotamian front to Enzeli on the Caspian is by road nearly 700 miles, and the road west of Hamadan is unmetalled and traverses rocky passes, swift-running streams, and broad alluvial valleys. Bridges had been broken and blown up, so that temporary expedients for crossing would have to be devised,

and one at least of the passes was over 7,000 feet above sea-level. The only possible mode of transport would be by motor-van, but the rocky nature of the ground on many stretches of the road would be terribly destructive of tyres. Much transport would also be required for the supply of petrol, oil, spare parts, ordnance stores, and the many and various articles of equipment necessary for maintaining a force in the field. Nevertheless, so great was the urgency of the situation that, in spite of all these drawbacks, it was decided to send a force, or Mission as it was called, under General Dunsterville from Mesopotamia to the Caspian. It was a great adventure but was justified in the result.

On June 1st, 1918, General Dunsterville arrived at Kasvin, then occupied by the Russian Colonel Bickerakov's partisans, some 1,200 strong, with weak British detachments. On the 8th of June the Russians and some British, and British light armoured cars, marched towards Enzeli on the Caspian. On their way they attacked and defeated some Persian guerilla troops; and an attack on the British Consulate and Bank at Resht was defeated by the 4th Hampshires and 1/2nd Gurkhas of the 36th Brigade, which had been detached for the expedition from the 14th Indian Division.

In the meanwhile various changes had been taking place at Baku. In July the Government of Baku was purely Bolshevik and opposed to British intervention. Actions had taken place between the Tartars and Turks on the one side and the Russians and Armenians on the other. But on July 26th a *coup d'état* was effected, the Bolshevik Government being overthrown and its place taken by a Centro-Caspian Dictatorship which at once appealed for British aid. The Turks now had a fine opportunity of seizing the town, but they were slow to take advantage of it, and, though it was impossible to land British troops in any number, a small mission of British officers with one platoon as escort was dispatched to report on the situation. They landed in Baku on August 4th, receiving an enthusiastic ovation, the townspeople were greatly cheered, and a Turkish attack on the following day was beaten off with heavy losses.

Further British reinforcements<sup>1</sup> were sent during the

<sup>1</sup> These consisted of a weak brigade of the 13th Division, so that 'New Army' battalions of the Royal Warwickshires, Worcestershires, and North Staffordshires

remainder of August, though these were necessarily few in numbers owing to the great length and difficulty of the line of communications from Mesopotamia through Persia. On arrival they took over portions of the defended perimeter of the town, and General Dunsterville made every effort to create order out of chaos. The inhabitants, however, seemed to think that now the British had arrived there was no longer any necessity to fight, and they gave little assistance. On August 26th the Turks attacked with considerable determination a prominent salient held by a British company, and supported by artillery charged home with the bayonet. The British were outnumbered, and not being supported by the townspeople had to withdraw. Further attacks were made during September by the Turks now largely reinforced, and the enemy were able to occupy positions which put the town at their mercy and enabled them to shell the shipping in the port at ranges of from three to five thousand yards. It was decided, therefore, to evacuate the British detachment; and with all the sick and wounded they embarked during the night of September 14th and arrived safely at Enzeli. The withdrawal was unfortunate, but British intervention had to this extent been successful that it had for a period of six weeks kept the enemy out of Baku and its very valuable oil-fields, had caused heavy casualties to the Turks, and had compelled them to bring up considerable reinforcements. The enemy had lost the opportunity of connecting up with Central Asia and India, for during the interval of delay which British intervention in Baku had caused, events in Syria and France were occurring which compelled the Turks to concentrate their efforts nearer home.

The overwhelming victories of General Allenby in Palestine and Syria now greatly affected the situation on the Turco-Persian frontier. The Turkish threat against Kasvin and Tehran was no longer to be feared, and the Turks were indeed hurriedly withdrawing their troops from the Caucasus. The moment was therefore propitious for a British move against the Turkish 6th Army covering the approaches to Mosul, and on October 7th General Marshall received orders to undertake this operation.

had the extraordinary experience of seeing active service on the shores of the Caspian.

'The bulk of the Turkish forces (calculated at about 9,000 rifles and 59 guns) was located on the Tigris and holding a position of great natural strength astride the Al Fat-ha Gorge. This position had been in their occupation nearly eighteen months, and had been thoroughly prepared for a protracted defence.' On the left bank of the Tigris the position extended for some 5 miles along the crest of the Jabal Hamrin, and opposite the junction of the Little Zab with the Tigris the Turks had constructed a second strong position.

General Marshall would have normally hesitated to attack such a position and would have attempted a turning movement via Kirkuk, but he was short of transport through having to support the force on the Caspian and to collect the harvest. He could not therefore move his troops very far from rail-head, and he had no alternative to a direct attack up the Tigris.

The main operations on the Tigris were entrusted to Lieutenant-General Sir Alexander Cobbe, commanding the 1st Army Corps,<sup>1</sup> and in addition the 7th and 11th Cavalry Brigades were placed at his disposal. 'The plan adopted was to turn the left of the Turkish position on the Tigris and force a crossing of the Little Zab, thus getting their right-bank positions in enfilade, and so enabling our troops on that bank to attack with greater chances of success. Having cleared the left bank of the enemy, it was then intended to cut his line of retreat on Mosul by means of cavalry working up the left bank and by light armoured motor-cars moving round the enemy's right.'

On the right bank of the Tigris was the 17th Division under Major-General W. S. Leslie, and on the left bank the 18th Division under Major-General H. D. Fanshawe. Neither of these divisions had so far been in action as a division, but the units of which they were composed had nearly all seen fighting. They contained, however, a good many recruits who had had no previous war experience. One company had been taken away from each of the Indian battalions earlier in the year for the purpose of forming newly raised battalions to replace white troops in the Palestine force. Each infantry brigade, moreover, had recently been reduced by one Indian battalion withdrawn for service at Salonika, and a serious outbreak of influenza also greatly weakened the fighting strength of all units.

<sup>1</sup> This now consisted of the 17th and 18th Indian Divisions.

By the morning of the 23rd of October General Cobbe had completed all his preliminary moves, and was in touch with the enemy both on the right and left banks of the Tigris. That afternoon a column under Brigadier-General Nightingale moved along the crest of the Jabal Hamrin against the Turkish left, whilst the 7th Cavalry Brigade moved round the north of those hills. The vigorous action of these two columns during the night caused the Turks to abandon the very strong Fatha position before daylight on the 24th. That same afternoon the 11th Cavalry Brigade, after a 45 mile ride through a waterless country, reached the Little Zab some 20 miles above its confluence with the Tigris. The Turks were holding the right bank in some strength, but in spite of opposition a crossing was forced; and the 17th and 18th Divisions at the same time followed up the retreating Turks, while the Royal Air Force co-operated with low-flying aeroplanes which bombed and machine-gunned the enemy columns.

On the 25th the 7th Cavalry Brigade and the leading (53rd) infantry brigade of the 18th Division forced a crossing of the Little Zab, near its junction with the Tigris. Meanwhile the 17th Division on the right bank was keeping in close touch with the Turks, but was meeting with great difficulties, and its advance was necessarily slow. The few tracks existing over the deep ravines and precipitous slopes were mere goat-paths, and all transport had to be converted from wheeled to pack. Hence the difficulties of getting forward the field and heavy artillery in time to support the infantry were immense, while the heat and lack of water entailed great exertions for the troops. The division, however, worked steadily forward.

On the 26th of October the 11th Cavalry Brigade (consisting of the 7th Hussars, Guides Cavalry, 23rd Cavalry, and 'W' Battery, R.H.A.) moving forward succeeded in taking up a strong position which blocked the road to Mosul. At the same time the light armoured motor-cars, moving round the right rear of the enemy, cut the telegraph line to Mosul, thus isolating the Tigris force from the 6th Turkish Army Headquarters.

On the 27th the 11th Cavalry Brigade launched an attack against the Turkish reserves with the double object of assisting the 17th Division and concealing its own weakness. Meanwhile the 17th Division throughout the day continued to

advance through extremely difficult country, maintaining a continuous pressure on the Turks in order to prevent them from putting all their weight against the 11th Cavalry Brigade. At 3 a.m. on October 28th the 17th Division continued its march over a broken, arid, and waterless country, and some eight hours later closed with the Turkish rear-guard at Qal'a Sharqat. The enemy's rearmost line of trenches was captured, but the men and animals were so exhausted owing to the heat, lack of water, and their previous exertions that they were in no state to pursue. During the day Turkish reserves, some 2,500 strong, with several batteries of artillery, made repeated attempts from the south to break through the 11th Cavalry Brigade who barred the way to Mosul, but their attacks were unsuccessful. During the afternoon reinforcements from the 53rd Infantry Brigade began to arrive, and at 6.30 p.m. the 7th Cavalry Brigade (13th Hussars, 13th and 14th Lancers (Indian), and 'V' Battery, R.H.A.), after a march of seventeen hours, in which they covered 43 miles, joined the 11th Cavalry Brigade on the right bank.

The enemy were now hemmed in between the 17th Division and the two cavalry brigades. On the other hand 'the troops were urgently in need of rest; the 17th Division had been marching and fighting for the preceding four days under most arduous conditions; the 11th Cavalry Brigade had been continuously in action for seventy-two hours, and all had made very long marches. Nevertheless, it was imperative to call on the troops for renewed exertions in order to close in the enemy and force his surrender.' 'In spite of exhaustion, darkness, and abominable roads, the troops of the 17th Division responded magnificently to the call made upon them, and by 11 a.m. on the 29th had driven back the Turkish rear-guard on to the main body which was holding a position north of Sharqat.'

This position, which consisted of successive lines of hasty entrenchments commanding a series of ravines, was attacked by the British in the face of a galling fire. The enemy delivered a counter-attack which penetrated some distance into our lines before it was stopped and dispersed, and the Turks fought very stubbornly far into the night. But 'gripped as in a vice, with his men packed in ravines which were raked by our guns from across the Tigris, Ismail Hakki, the Turkish Commander, found himself in a hopeless position. All attempts to break

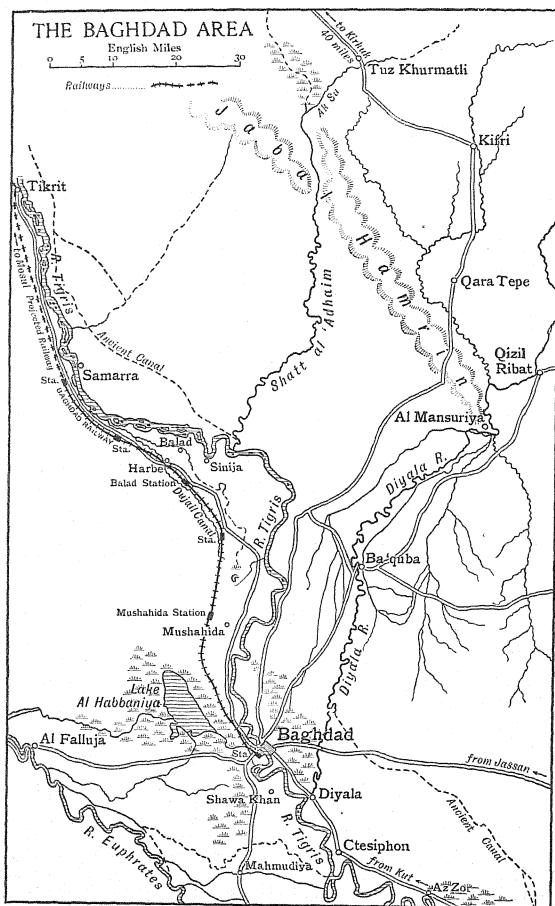


# THE BAGHDAD AREA

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through had failed', no relief was in sight, and communication with his Commander-in-Chief had been rendered impossible. So 'at dawn on October 30th, just as our troops were about to renew the attack, white flags appeared all along the Turkish lines, and later on Ismail Hakki surrendered in person.'

'Immediately after the surrender the 7th Cavalry Brigade and light armoured cars were ordered to push rapidly along the Mosul road.' They were afterwards joined by the 11th Cavalry Brigade and 54th Infantry Brigade, the whole forming a force with which General Marshall intended to strike at Mosul itself, the chief town of the vilayet of that name and the head-quarters of the 6th Turkish Army. On November 1st, when news of the armistice with Turkey was received, both cavalry brigades had reached a point only 12 miles south of Mosul, where they were met by a Turkish official with a flag of truce. But as General Marshall had reason to fear for the safety of the Christian inhabitants of Mosul, he ordered the cavalry to move to that place as a deterrent to disorder.

Thus were concluded the campaigns in Mesopotamia which had lasted just four years, for it was on November 6th, 1914, that Fao Fort was captured. During that time 114,000 square miles of the Turkish Empire had been conquered and occupied, while 45,500 prisoners and 250 guns, together with vast quantities of war material of all descriptions, had been captured. These results had been achieved 'in a country destitute of shade in summer and impassable from floods in wet weather'. The military effort to achieve this success was stupendous, but the effect of that effort had been to save India from attack and to aid in that breaking-up of the Turks which was so important an element in and so marked a sign of the crumbling up of the whole Germanic alliance.

The campaigns in Mesopotamia were in a very special sense an Indian contribution to the defeat of the Central Powers. The Indian contingent in France in the beginning of the war did work of incalculable value at a supreme crisis; the Indianization of the Egyptian Field Force at another moment of crisis was another service of essential importance. But if in the last stages of the war the proportion of Indian troops in the Palestine theatre of war may have equalled or even slightly

exceeded the ratio in Mesopotamia,<sup>1</sup> it was only for a very short time that India bore the brunt of the Palestine operations, whereas from start to finish the Mesopotamian campaigns were mainly fought by the Indian Army, were largely administered and supplied from India, and were closely connected politically and economically with India. It was the theatre of war which was nearest to India, which affected India most directly and closely. It was to Indian hospitals that sick and wounded were taken from Mesopotamia, to India that officers and men went for leave from Mesopotamia ; it was India that supplied three-quarters of the combatants who fought in Mesopotamia and most of the imported labour. More units of the Indian Army saw service in Mesopotamia than in any other theatre of war : nearly a hundred of its battalions were there at one time and another, and almost as many cavalry units as served in France or Palestine. If the military organization and the administrative system of India were severely strained by the demands made on them for Mesopotamia, the campaigns afforded the Indian Army ample opportunities for the display of its finest qualities of devotion, self-sacrifice, courage, and resource, and for adding to its records many incidents which notably enrich and enhance its finest achievements of earlier days.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There was one non-Indian infantry division in Palestine out of a total of seven, one out of four in Mesopotamia, but the cavalry and lines-of-communication troops in Mesopotamia were almost entirely Indian, which was not the case in Palestine.

<sup>2</sup> This chapter has mainly been taken from the official dispatches.

## CHAPTER IX

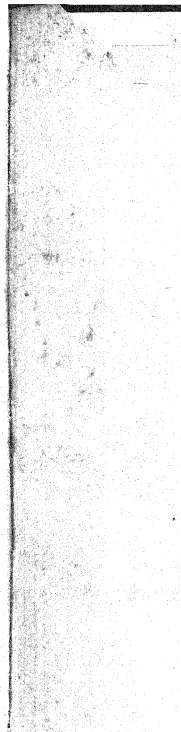
### EAST AFRICA

WHEN the war broke out, the Germans were fortunate in possessing in East Africa a commander of exceptional ability, resourcefulness, and strength of character. General von Lettow Vorbeck had arrived in German East Africa in January 1914. He was aware of the possibility of a great war. He was aware, too, that the fate of the German colonies would be decided in Europe and not in the colonies themselves. He recognized also that the forces at his disposal were so small that they could play only a very subordinate part in any European war. But, small as they were, he conceived that, if skilfully handled, they might detain a very much larger number of enemy forces. He therefore set himself to organize and train troops for that purpose, minded to keep his forces collected for an attack on the frontier between German and British East Africa. Parallel to that frontier, and for much of its length at no great distance from it, runs the Uganda railway. If he could threaten that railway he would cause a considerable body of troops to be employed for its protection.

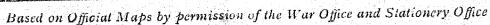
His first journey of reconnaissance and inspection had this object in view. In January 1914—that is immediately after his arrival—he went by sea from Dar es Salaam to Tanga and thence to the country round the Kilimanjaro mountain. Here he found volunteer rifle corps being formed, which in a short time would probably include all the Germans in the territory capable of bearing arms.

At the beginning of the war a number of Germans were present at Dar es Salaam, preparing for an exhibition and for the ceremonial opening of the railway which had just been completed from the port to Lake Tanganyika. The protective force consisted at the time, according to von Lettow, of 216 Europeans and 2,540 Askari. In addition there was a police force of 45 Europeans and 2,154 Askari. The total numbers enrolled during the war were about 3,000 Europeans and 11,000 Askari, including non-combatants.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Slightly different figures have been given in vol. iv, p. 154.



1914-1917



When war began, the only Regular forces in the British East Africa Protectorate and in Uganda were two battalions of the King's African Rifles.<sup>1</sup> The garrison was barely sufficient for defensive purposes and was really intended for internal police work and nothing more, to guard against native uprising and tribal feuds. For defence against a German attack, still more for an offensive against German East Africa, troops from overseas were required, and in the initial stages of the war they came exclusively from India. Mombasa itself might easily have fallen into von Lettow's hands if a contingent of troops from India, under Brigadier-General J. M. Stewart, had not arrived just in time to prevent the town being seized by a German force, which was working up along the coast. Stewart's troops were about 2,000 in number, and consisted of the 29th Punjabis together with the Rampur Imperial Service Infantry.

The first detachment left India on August 19th—it was the first of all India's contingents—and reached Mombasa on September 1st; three days later the 29th Punjabis fired India's first shots in the war in a sharp encounter near Tsavo Bridge on the Uganda railway, driving back a strong raiding party of Germans.

Holding the view that he could best protect German East Africa by threatening us in our own territory, von Lettow would himself have liked to attack the Uganda railway from Kilimanjaro. But the governor, Dr. Schnee, would not agree, and the German forces were concentrated a day's march out of Dar es Salaam. An attack on Taveta was, however, made by Major Kraut, and this place, which lies south-east of Kilimanjaro, just within the British frontier, was lightly held and easily captured by the Germans on August 15th.

Early in September von Lettow moved his head-quarters to Korogwe on the northern railway, that is the railway from Tanga to Kilimanjaro. He was expecting a British landing at Tanga, but he still had in mind an attack on the Uganda railway, so he proceeded to Taveta and from there conducted a series of minor operations directed towards acquiring information about the country. At the end of October, however, he received news of an impending British attack upon Tanga. He accordingly proceeded there and on the

<sup>1</sup> See vol. i, p. 263. See also vol. iv, pp. 225, 275.

2nd of November was informed that two British cruisers and fourteen transports had appeared off the town.

The decision to add a new offensive campaign in East Africa to existing commitments was hardly in consonance with sound strategy and not altogether called for by local conditions. Moreover, the sending of an Expeditionary Force from India to East Africa was not to the liking of the Government of India, who looked to the Persian Gulf as a more useful destination than East Africa for such troops as India could still spare to cross the seas, and did not recognize any special concern of India in East Africa. On the other hand, assuming that high policy dictated pressure on the Germans at all points, pressure in East Africa could undoubtedly be most easily applied from India, and there was beyond question a traditional connexion between India and the eastern side of Africa, where East Indians were numerous and where before the 'Scramble for Africa' the Government of India or the Government of Bombay had been the medium of British dealings with East Africa. In any case, Stewart's Indian contingent having saved Mombasa, it was now decided, with India's help, to take the offensive and attack the Germans. Our plans were to attack them at Longido (north-west of Kilimanjaro) and at Tanga on the coast. We should then, we expected, be able to push our way inland along the railway and force them to evacuate the Usambara plateau. Major-General Aitken, with 6,000 troops sent direct from India, was entrusted with the attack on Tanga, left Bombay on October 16th, and arrived at Tanga on the 2nd of November. A summons to the Germans to surrender was refused, and two days later, the enemy having been given a breathing space of great value for bringing up reinforcements, General Aitken landed a portion of his troops at the south end of the bay. They had to advance on Tanga through dense bush. On the right the 2nd Loyal North Lancashires and the Kashmir Imperial Service Infantry fought their way into the town, but a vigorous German counter-stroke, dealt by troops whom von Lettow had just fetched down by rail, drove back the left to the beach, and the right, taken in flank and unsupported, had to conform and fight its way back. There was no other course left than to re-embark and retire to Mombasa, and, inasmuch as, through the breakdown of transport for water, the attack on Longido also failed, the



first offensive against German East Africa completely fell through. It was a very serious setback, and for the time placed the British forces in East Africa entirely on the defensive, while it revived the determination of the Germans throughout their territory to resist and not to surrender.

In April 1915 Brigadier-General Tighe took over command of the British forces in East Africa. For some months past operations had been taking place on Lake Victoria. The Germans early in the war had seized the small port of Karungu and had hoped to occupy the terminus on the lake of the Uganda railway. But with the arrival of reinforcements<sup>1</sup> General Stewart had been able to assume the offensive and seize their base at Bukoba on the west shores of the lake.<sup>2</sup> Uganda was thus secured from any attack by water.

From Nyasaland we had also conducted operations against the Germans, and though they had at first the command of Lake Tanganyika, a body of water 600 miles in length, we succeeded in transporting overland two motor launches of a speed and armament sufficient to outclass the German gunboats; and eventually we acquired command of the lake for ourselves.<sup>3</sup>

Beyond these small local activities no military operations of any importance took place during 1915. The Germans had not sufficient strength to take the offensive in force; and we had so many preoccupations elsewhere that we could not afford to send troops enough to distant East Africa. Thus the year 1915 came to an end without any appreciable change in the situation in East Africa, except that the German colony, completely cut off by sea and thrown upon its own resources, had to watch the gradual strengthening of the British position and to see the weak points at which blows might have been struck secured and made good. In the operations by which this was done, a very large share of the work fell on the Indian troops whom Generals Stewart and Aitken had brought out. These were minor operations, accompanied by not a little in the way of hardships and carried out under unfavourable conditions; they afforded few opportunities for brilliant achievements and they seemed to have accomplished little, but they paved the way to the offensive which was to follow.

<sup>1</sup> The 98th Infantry were among the troops employed in the lake area.

<sup>2</sup> See vol. iv, pp. 158-9, and 230-1.

<sup>3</sup> See vol. iv, pp. 243-7.

Without the assistance of the contingent from India, British East Africa and Uganda would have fared badly.

With the successful conclusion of General Botha's operations against German South-West Africa, considerable South African forces were rendered available for service in East Africa, while on the withdrawal of the Indian Corps from France several good Indian regiments, mainly composed of Frontier and Trans-frontier men, were dispatched to East Africa in time to do notable service in the new campaign. On the 19th of February 1916 General J. C. Smuts arrived at Mombasa to command the British forces in East Africa. General Tighe had already been pushing forward preparations for an attack on the Kilimanjaro area, and this plan General Smuts adopted.

The Germans at that time were in a favourable position. They were still in occupation of Taveta where they had established an entrenched camp with outposts from 13 to 17 miles farther forward. At a point mid-way between Taveta and Mombasa they maintained a garrison of about 500 rifles with the object of raiding our railway communications. In the coastal region they maintained a considerable garrison on the Umba river. Their initial stock of munitions had been supplemented by blockade runners and by guns from the *Königsberg* and other German warships which had been driven into East African harbours by our blockade. General von Lettow by his skill, energy, and resourcefulness had organized and trained a powerful force to oppose General Smuts. He had not obtained any success in attacking the Uganda railway it is true, but he had so threatened us as to cause us to employ the major part of our forces for its defence. On the other hand he was himself well situated for his own defence. For 130 miles from the coast to the neighbourhood of Kilimanjaro German territory was protected by the high ranges of the Usambara and Pare mountains; and the only practical gap in this rampart was a space of about 4 or 5 miles, in which were situated Taveta, Moshi, and Kahe, between the northern end of the Pare mountains and the outlying spurs of Kilimanjaro.

In this gap von Lettow had concentrated his main forces, and through this gap Smuts intended to drive. He sent part of his force, under General Stewart, round the north side of Kilimanjaro to threaten the enemy's rear, and with the bulk

of his troops he moved against Taveta at the mouth of the gap. The Indian units who took part in these operations included a squadron of the 17th Cavalry, the 27th Indian Mountain Battery, the Faridkot (Imperial Service) Sappers and Miners, the 29th Punjabis, 129th Baluchis, and 3rd Kashmir (Imperial Service) Infantry in General Stewart's 1st Division, with the 28th Indian Mountain Battery and the 130th Baluchis, 2nd Kashmiris, and the 61st Pioneers in General Tighe's 2nd Division which was in the main body. The 40th Pathans joined the main body at a rather later stage of the operations; at this time they, together with some Imperial Service Infantry, were operating on the coast, while the 98th Infantry were still with the Lake Detachment, and several other Indian battalions, both Regular and Imperial Service, were defending the line of communications.

The force moving round Kilimanjaro encountered great difficulties due to the density of the tropical forest and the absence of roads; but starting on the 5th of March it eventually, on the 14th of March, joined hands at New Moshi with General Van Deventer who had advanced through the gap. This northern force had met with little armed opposition. The force which advanced through the gap, on the other hand, had encountered opposition of the most serious nature. On the 7th of March General Van Deventer commenced his march to the river Lumi and beyond it to the foot-hills north of Taveta to turn the enemy's position. By the evening of the 8th he had crossed the Lumi and driven the enemy from the foot-hills on to Taveta. At dawn on the 9th Van Deventer sent his mounted troops to cut the road from Taveta to Moshi, and the enemy thereupon evacuated Taveta but proceeded to occupy a strong position in Latema hill to the south-west. Some very difficult fighting here took place, our attacking troops forcing their way on the 11th through dense jungle. In this the 130th Baluchis were heavily engaged, a party making a most gallant charge into the enemy's position. Eventually the enemy withdrew from the ridge towards Kahe and General Van Deventer pushed on towards Moshi which he occupied.

The Germans had now retreated behind the Ruvu river, and General Smuts employed the next few days in improving the road from Taveta to Moshi and in reorganizing transport

and bringing up supplies before making an advance towards Kahe and the Ruvu river. On the 18th of March this advance began. As usual progress was slow through the well-nigh impenetrable bush which surrounded the enemy's position. But Smuts directed Van Deventer to cross the Pangani (Ruvu) river below Kahe and so turn the enemy's position. On the 21st Van Deventer, having crossed the Pangani with some difficulty, occupied in succession Kahe hill and Kahe station. The enemy then blew up the railway bridge over the Pangani (Ruvu) river, but realizing the importance of the Kahe hill made several though unsuccessful attempts to regain it. In the meantime General Sheppard, who had beaten off a determined counter-attack on the night of the 20th/21st, had been ordered to advance along the Masai Kraal-Kahe road to support Van Deventer; but the enemy were in a strong position between two rivers and Sheppard was unable to make any headway. At dawn on the 22nd, however, it was found that, realizing that Van Deventer had turned their position, the Germans had slipped away across the Ruvu river.

Thus the conquest of the Kilimanjaro area, probably the richest and most desirable area of German East Africa, was completed. The enemy had been driven into the Pare mountains and down the Tanga railway. The spirit of the British forces, depressed by their long inactivity, was revived and strengthened, and General Smuts was able in confidence to mature his plans for the further conquest of the country.

But for the moment a pause was necessary. The rainy season had now set in with extreme violence, and it was necessary for Smuts without delay to dispose his forces most advantageously with a view to their health and comfort. The opportunity was also taken to reorganize his forces, keeping the contingents from South Africa together in two divisions under Major-General Van Deventer and Major-General Brits, and forming the East African and Indian troops<sup>1</sup> into another division under Major-General A. R. Hoskins.

Smuts had not merely to defeat the enemy's forces but effectively to occupy the country, and the country was immense. It contained, he wrote, no vital point anywhere, no

<sup>1</sup> The 40th Pathans were now in the 2nd East African Brigade, the two Kashmiri battalions being amalgamated in the 1st Brigade, to which General Sheppard had been transferred, Brigadier-General Hannington taking command of the 2nd.

important cities or centres in defence of which the enemy must stand and fight it out to the last. It had practically no roads; the only dominant economical features were the two railways. Various lines of attack were open to him. He might have secured Dar es Salaam and advanced inland from the coast along the central railway, with Dar es Salaam as his base. But he ruled this plan out because of the difficulty of landing and because of the unhealthiness of the coast districts. He decided to push Van Deventer southwards from the Kili-manjaro area straight into the very heart of German East Africa, while the remainder of the British troops, including the Indian units up at the front, were retained on the Ruvu river to watch von Lettow's main forces.

On the 3rd of April Van Deventer began his march south, and after overcoming resistance by small garrisons and patrols occupied Kondoa Irangi on the 19th, thereby placing us in possession of the high healthy and fertile plateau—the Masai steppe—which connects the central railway with the Kili-manjaro area. He occupied a dominant strategic position for any further advance either southward in the direction of the central railway or westward to Tabora or eastward to the Usambara mountains.

For the time, however, no further advance was possible, as the numerous rivers were coming down in flood sweeping away the bridges which our troops had constructed with so much labour, turning the roads into impassable mud tracks, and making transport a physical impossibility. As much as four inches of rain would fall in a single day, and the low-lying parts of the country assumed the appearance of lakes. The line connecting the Uganda railway with the Tanga-Kilimanjaro line had by this time reached Taveta, but Van Deventer's division in the interior was cut off and had to live for weeks on such supplies as could be collected locally.

The enemy soon realized the threat involved in Van Deventer's movement, and transferring troops from the northern to the central railway took steps to meet it. On the 9th of May he attacked Van Deventer with great determination but without success, and with this defeat von Lettow's 'last hope of successful resistance to any large portion of our forces was extinguished'.

Such was the position when in the middle of May the rains

abated, the ground began to harden, and there was a prospect of a general forward movement again becoming possible. This movement had of necessity to be against the enemy in the Pare and Usambara mountains. These had to be cleared before any further advance into the heart of German East Africa would be safe. Smuts's general idea was to move eastward along the mountains to a point opposite Handeni, and then, swinging south, march towards the central railway in a general direction parallel with Van Deventer. In order to forestall the enemy in any attempt which he might make to bring back the force which he had sent to oppose Van Deventer, it was important to move rapidly along the Pare mountains. But the nature of the country was such as to preclude rapidity of movement. The mountains are in huge blocks with fertile valleys. 'The southern slopes are precipitous, and immediately below runs the Tanga railway, while farther south dense bush extends for 15 to 20 miles to the Pangani, an impassable river flowing almost parallel to the railway and the mountains. The enemy held the mountains and the railway and had outposts along the Pangani river.'

Smuts's plan was to send the main column, in which was General Sheppard's brigade with most of the artillery, down the left bank of the Pangani, somewhat in advance of a second smaller column<sup>1</sup> following the railway, while a third column was to enter the Pare mountains from the far side—the eastern side—and passing through a gap join the centre column near Same. In this way, with his flanks well forward in the mountains and on the river, he expected that the enemy's resistance on the railway would be hopeless.

The advance began on the 18th of May when the 3rd King's African Rifles under Colonel Fitzgerald moved in the direction of the gap. On the 22nd of May Brigadier-General Hannington's Indian brigade moved along the railway, while Sheppard's and Beves's brigades moved down the Pangani river. The enemy realizing the turning movement evacuated his position, and Hannington occupied Same on the 25th and joined Fitzgerald next day. The advance continued. Bwiko was occupied on the 31st May, after a fight at Mikochine in which the 29th Punjabis and 130th Baluchis did effective work.

<sup>1</sup> This was under Brigadier-General Hannington and included the 40th Pathans, 129th Baluchis, and 2nd Kashmiris.

The enemy then retired, not on the Usambara mountains and Tanga but in the direction of Handeni, entrenching himself on the right bank of the Pangani river. 'It was then evident that he meant to give up the northern railway and make for the central railway.' Smuts had reached the Usambara in ten days, covering in that time a distance of 130 miles of trackless country along the Pangani and through the mountains. A short pause was now necessary while a bridge over the Pangani was completed.

On the 8th of June the advance was resumed in a southerly direction from the Pangani. There was a sharp fight on June 9th in which the 130th Baluchis suffered severely, but the enemy was forced to retire. A dry belt of 32 miles had now to be crossed, and the enemy were found on the 15th of June to be strongly entrenched at Handeni. By a turning movement to the west his communications were threatened and he was compelled to retire. On the 19th Handeni was occupied by Sheppard's brigade. The pursuit of the enemy continued, and in a fight on the 24th of June on the Lukigura river the Kashmir Infantry especially distinguished themselves, storming a German position at the point of the bayonet.

The eastern slopes of the Nguru block of mountains had now been reached, which the enemy were evidently occupying in considerable strength. Our transport had reached the utmost radius of its capacity. The main column had had to march for about 200 miles along routes prepared by themselves, mostly by cutting through the bush. The troops had been on half rations for some time and badly needed rest and reorganization. 'Several units were reduced to 30 per cent. of their original effectives owing to the ravages of malaria, and the difficulties of evacuating the sick were as great as those of forwarding supplies and reinforcements.' Smuts therefore formed a large standing camp in which to rest and refit the troops preparatory to the next phase of operations.

During this interval the 5th Indian Infantry<sup>1</sup> moved south along the coast towards Tanga. Another force under Colonel Price was landed 8 miles north, and with the Navy co-operating Tanga was occupied practically without opposition on the 7th of July. To assist in these operations and if possible to

<sup>1</sup> This unit, after serving in the Cameroons (cf. vol. iv, pp. 100 note and 103), had been transferred to East Africa.

intercept the retreat of the Germans from Tanga, General Hannington was directed to move south-east from Handeni, and his advance assisted to clear a large area of the enemy. He then returned to Lukigura, having incorporated in his brigade the 57th Rifles, who took the place of the 129th Baluchis, too much reduced by malaria to continue in the field without a rest. It must not be forgotten that to men from the Indian frontier the climate of East Africa was quite as unfavourable as to Europeans and the sick-rate of the Indian troops was very high, so much so that battalions were often reduced to little more than the strength of a company.

Operations were also undertaken in the district of Lake Victoria which resulted in the capture on the 14th of July of the important stronghold of Mwanza on the southern shores of the lake. 'The rapidity with which the enemy abandoned his valuable Lake Provinces and Mwanza was a clear indication that the eventual retreat would not be towards Tabora, but farther east towards Dar es Salaam, or south towards Mahenge.'

Van Deventer had also again become active. On the 24th of June he attacked the enemy's positions all along the line round Kondoa Irangi, and succeeded in occupying them with comparatively small loss. Following up this attack he sent a column direct to the central railway and 'by the end of July a hundred miles of the central railway was thus in our possession. Practically every bridge or culvert was found blown up, but our advance had been so rapid that the enemy had had no time for further destruction of the track.'

A Belgian force had by this time crossed Lake Tanganyika and occupied Ujiji and Kigoma, the lake terminus of the central railway; while in the south-west General Northey's force, moving up from Rhodesia, had occupied Malangali and was prepared to move on Iringa.

The time had now come for a further advance of Smuts's main force, which had been halted opposite the Nguru mountains. The general's plan was to advance by way of the mountains and clear them as he advanced, so that the force in them might not remain as a threat to his line of communications. This he meant to do by wide turning movements through the mountains which would have the effect of threatening or cutting the enemy's communications. The enemy were



strongly entrenched in the mountains along the Mjonga river. On the 5th of August the advance began. General Enslin with the 2nd Mounted Brigade, followed on the 6th by Beves's South African Brigade, marched toward the west flank of the mountains; and on the 7th General Sheppard moved out from Msiha camp upon the eastern flank, his part being to make a holding attack on the main position. General Hannington's brigade was with the central column which moved down the Mjonga valley. On the 8th Enslin, moving through a gap, occupied Mhonda well in rear of the enemy's position. The enemy, who was being pressed in front by Hannington and threatened on the east by Sheppard, was thereby forced to abandon his defence in the mountains and retire as fast as he could. Sheppard moving on the east occupied Kipera on the 13th. Smuts's further movements after the enemy were greatly hampered by numerous rivers the bridges across which had been destroyed. On the 18th of August he crossed the Wami river near Dakawa, after a sharp fight, in which the 130th Baluchis were in the main attack from the north, while the 29th Punjabis and 2nd Kashmiris struck in from the north-east to threaten the German right flank and rear. The action resulted in the retreat of the Germans, and then a halt ensued while a suitable bridge was being constructed over the river.

While these operations were taking place Van Deventer was also moving eastward. On the 9th of August he advanced over a waterless area and engaged the enemy. Day by day he drove him back along the railway from west to east, and on the 22nd of August occupied Kilosa the day before Smuts resumed his advance from the Wami. Van Deventer in this progress had overcome many difficulties, for the railway followed for 25 miles a narrow defile cut through the mountains by a river. Every yard of advance was contested by the enemy, who received our advance-guard with one or several ambushes and then fell back on a well-prepared position. Owing to bad roads, shortage of transport, and the rapidity of advance, the adequate rationing of the troops was not possible. In consequence of this underfeeding and overworking the men suffered sadly in health, and practically all the animals were infected by fly.

The Germans were now retiring on Morogoro, and Smuts's aim was to bring them to bay there if possible. To this end

Enslin, who had reached the central railway on the 23rd of August, was ordered still farther south, and he occupied Mlali on the 24th of August. It was hoped to bottle up the enemy in Morogoro by making a turning movement on the east to correspond with this movement of Enslin's on the west, but Smuts was unaware that there was a route through the mountains to the south of Morogoro by which the enemy might effect a retreat. The capture of the ends of the mountain was of no avail. There was an outlet through the middle.

Smuts crossed the river Wami on the 23rd of August and made a cunningly devised movement first north-east and then south-east to get to the eastern end of the mountains behind Morogoro. Owing to the nature of the country and the bush, the absence of water, and heat, the two days' march 'proved one of the most trying of the whole campaign'. At the end he was 18 miles north-east of Morogoro, and his presence there must have been a complete surprise to the enemy, who had massed his forces on the west side to oppose Enslin. Owing to the exhaustion of man and beast Smuts was unable to move on the 25th, but on the 26th the march was resumed, one portion of his force being directed on Morogoro itself and another on the eastern flank of the mountains in rear. It seemed that at last von Lettow would be surrounded and brought to bay. But when Morogoro was reached the enemy was gone. His flight had been precipitate, and many proofs were found of his demoralized condition. But of the main fact that he had escaped there was no doubt.

Despite that men and animals were worn out with the exertions of the last three weeks, Smuts decided to continue the pursuit. Unfortunately the country through which he had to move was very well suited for rear-guard actions by which the enemy might hold up the pursuit. The track along the eastern slopes of the mountains passed 'through very difficult broken foot-hills, covered either with bush or grass growing from 6 to 12 feet high, through which any progress was slow, painful, and dangerous. The bridging of the Ruvu took several days, and for some distance beyond the road passed along the face of precipitous rocks, round which the enemy had constructed a gallery on piles.' As the gallery would not carry our mechanical transport, some days were occupied in blasting away the mountain side and constructing a proper road. The nature of the country beyond and the continued

fighting made progress slow, 'while road-making and bridging behind engaged the attention, not only of the pioneers, but of a large portion of the troops as well.' Several weeks were occupied in cutting a road through a spur which ends in a precipitous face towards the south. Tulo was occupied by Hannington's brigade on the 10th of September. The enemy made a resolute stand for several days near Dunthumi, but the 57th Rifles secured a hill which was the key of the position, the 27th Mountain Battery did fine work, covering the advance of the 3rd Kashmiris down the main road, and in the end the Germans were driven south to the Mgeta river on the 13th of September.

While these movements were being made on the east of the Uluguru mountains, Enslin was working round on the west, following the enemy through the mountains and driving them from position after position. From the amount of heavy gun ammunition which was abandoned, it was clear that a long and elaborate defence of these mountains had been intended. But the unexpected arrival of Enslin and 'the audacious and successful pursuit into the mountains', combined with the operations on the eastern flank, had forced the enemy to abandon his plans and retreat towards Kisaki. Here he made a stand and drove off attacks on the 7th and 8th of September. It was only on the 15th of September, when the movement on the east flank had made itself felt and his retreat was threatened, that he was compelled to evacuate Kisaki. He had now been driven everywhere from the mountains and had taken up a defensive line along the Mgeta river south of Dunthumi and farther west astride the road from Kisaki to the Rufiji. Smuts did not now press his attack on the line. His men were exhausted with ceaseless fighting and marching, and a thorough rest was imperatively necessary.

Simultaneously with these movements against von Lettow movements along the coast had also taken place. In the middle of August General Edwards assembled a force of about 1,800 rifles under Colonel Price for the seizure of Dar es Salaam. One column moved from Bagamoyo, a port which the Navy had occupied on the 15th of August, southward towards the central railway to seize the bridge across the Ruvu<sup>1</sup> before the enemy could destroy it. The other column was to

<sup>1</sup> There were two rivers called Ruvu, one the Upper Pangani, the other the river here mentioned. See vol. iv, p. 165 note.

move along the coast. Both were to converge on Dar es Salaam. Neither column met with any serious opposition. The enemy was aware of our overwhelming force and was 'anxious to avoid siege operations against a town containing a large German non-combatant population'. The Germans decided therefore not to defend the place, and everywhere fell back before our advance. But the Ruvu bridge was completely destroyed.

The two columns advanced on Dar es Salaam. At the same time two British ships of war appeared before that place. On the 3rd of September it surrendered, and on the 4th was occupied by our troops. One 6-inch gun was blown up, while the rest of the artillery had been taken away south by the enemy. The railway station and harbour works had been effectively destroyed. Three ships had been sunk beyond any hope of being salvaged. A fourth was sunk but subsequently salvaged by us.

General Smuts now thought the time had come for effectively occupying the whole of the coast. He accordingly made arrangements with the admiral, Admiral Charlton, for conveying troops south and co-operating in the seizure of all important points. Kilwa, Lindi, Sudi Bay, and other ports were all occupied before the end of September, and at Kilwa a strong force was landed for operations which it was proposed to conduct against the enemy from that quarter. 'This occupation of the southern coast not only helped to pen the enemy up in the interior, but was intended to prevent any assistance from reaching the enemy from oversea.'

While the coast was being occupied, measures were taken to restore Dar es Salaam harbour and to reconstruct the central railway. The railway track had been largely left undamaged by the Germans, but the bridges had been carefully demolished. 'Between Kilosa and Dar es Salaam alone about sixty bridges, some of very considerable dimensions, had been wrecked. To restore these so as to carry heavy locomotives would take many months.' But the South African Pioneers originated a plan by which the track might be used for light traffic till the bridges could be rebuilt. This plan was 'to restore the bridges with local material so as to carry a weight of about six tons and to narrow the gauge of our heavy motor lorries so that they could run on railway trolley wheels over the line thus restored. A motor tractor with trailer carries ten to

fifteen tons of supplies', and thus considerable use could be made of the railway. By the 6th of October the railway track was open for motor traffic for 300 miles from Dar es Salaam, and it was possible thus to use this port as our sea base. By the end of October it was open for motor traffic to Tabora.

For Tabora had by that date been occupied by allied forces. A British force had advanced southward from Mwanza on Lake Victoria<sup>1</sup> and Belgian forces had advanced both southward parallel with the British and also eastward from Ujiji on Lake Tanganyika. The Belgians occupied Tabora on the 19th of September, while a week later the British struck the central railway a few miles east of that place. The enemy retired in two columns—one eastward along the railway, the other southward. Both columns were making for the Great Ruaha river—as the Rufiji is called in its upper course—with the object of joining the main enemy force which had been retiring before Smuts.

From the south-west we were also pressing in upon the enemy. General Northey, of whom General Smuts wrote as conducting his operations 'with remarkable ability and vigour', had occupied Lupembe on the 19th of August and Iringa on the 29th of August.

In the extreme south a Portuguese force crossed the Ruvuma river and occupied strategic points to the north of it.

From the middle of September until nearly the end of December there was a pause in the main operations, the two sides facing each other on the Mgeta river. There was much to be done in the way of reorganization, re-fitting, and other preparations. For one thing, so large a proportion of the force had contracted malaria that the bulk of the white troops had to be invalided to South Africa, while many of the Indian units were reduced to a very weak state. Some had already been sent back to India, and in their place the 30th and 33rd Punjabis were ordered to East Africa, while the expansion of the King's African Rifles and the employment of a Nigerian brigade filled the gaps left by the withdrawal of the white troops.

At this phase in the campaign the Germans intended to

<sup>1</sup> On the clearing of the Germans out of the lake area the Lake Detachment was broken up and the 17th Indian Infantry transferred to the 3rd South African Brigade.

hold their position to the north of the Rufiji as long as possible, then to retire to the healthy Mahenge plateau, and if driven from that point to make their way south into Portuguese territory. Smuts's immediate object was to defeat their forces north of the Rufiji and, if they withdrew, to try to cut them off from their base, Mahenge. He proposed to utilize the troops whom he had landed at Kilwa to work into the interior as required, and by attacking from both north and east he hoped to close in on the enemy and prevent his escape to Mahenge. Van Deventer on the north-west of Mahenge and Northey on the south-west were to co-operate in one more effort to capture their very elusive foe.

The force operating from Kilwa was placed under the command of General Hannington and consisted of the 2nd Loyal North Lancashires, 40th Pathans, a composite battalion of Indian troops, two battalions 2nd King's African Rifles, and two 5-inch howitzer batteries. This force took up a position in the country round Kilwa in order to cover the improvement of the new base.

But during this period of reconstruction and rearrangement the enemy had not been inactive. He had made many raids on Van Deventer's and Northey's scattered outposts, and now awakening to the danger to his line of retreat which the presence of the Kilwa force indicated, he attacked it. On the 7th of November he made a preliminary assault on an outpost at Kibata but was repulsed, and on the 6th of December again attacked in some force and with guns which could not have been brought up without appreciable labour. The Germans succeeded in occupying hills and caused us considerable trouble, but after sharp fighting, in which the 129th Baluchis made a most gallant and successful counter-attack, they were driven off and eventually in January they withdrew. About the same time a German attack on a force guarding the roads from Dar es Salaam to the Rufiji, with which the 57th Rifles were serving, was also repulsed.

At the end of the year the Portuguese were unfortunately driven back over the Ruvuma, and some guns, machine guns, ammunition, and stores fell into the hands of the enemy. It was evident that the Portuguese would not be able to bar von Lettow's retreat southward when the general advance came to be made.

The engineers and pioneers having improved the roads, and supplies and ammunition having been accumulated, Smuts was now ready to enter on the next phase of his campaign. He formed four columns. Firstly, General Beves's brigade, with the Kashmir Mountain Battery and the Faridkot Sappers and Miners, was to make a wide movement to the westward to Kirengwe, and eventually to a crossing of the Rufiji river well above the crossing at Kibambawe which von Lettow was using. Secondly, General Sheppard with the 1st East African Brigade<sup>1</sup> and four batteries was to march from Dakawa on Wiransi. Thirdly, Brigadier-General Cunliffe with the Nigerian Brigade was to attack the Mgeta position from Nkessa's. Fourthly, Lieutenant-Colonel R. A. Lyall with a battalion from the Nigerian Brigade and the 2nd Kashmir Infantry, detached from Sheppard, was to advance from Tulo southward to Kiruru.

The main operations began on the 1st January 1917, Beves's advanced troops having already occupied Kirengwe. The 130th Baluchis under Lieutenant-Colonel Dyke, who were moving ahead of Sheppard's force to cover the march of Beves's brigade, made for Wiransi and were heavily attacked by three companies of the enemy. The Baluchis drove off four assaults and then proceeded on their way, occupying Wiransi by 11 a.m. Colonel Lyall reached the Mgeta on the previous day and was now making for Chimbe, which he reached that afternoon. General Sheppard captured most of the rear-guard at Dakawa and dispersed the remainder. Cunliffe advanced against the enemy's line on the Mgeta, the enemy very soon retired, and by 1 p.m. we were in possession of the north bank of the Mgeta. Beves's brigade still advanced, and by the evening of the 1st his foremost troops were 10 miles south of Kirengwe.

This was followed by an advance by Sheppard and Lyall against a new German position which had been located about 10 miles north of the Rufiji, while the Nigerians were drawn back to Mgeta and then sent on to reinforce Beves. On the morning of the 4th Sheppard from the south-west and Dyke from the north attacked the enemy at Beho-beho. It had been hoped that we should have been able to cut in behind him, but by 1 p.m. he had again slipped away. It was in this

<sup>1</sup> General Sheppard still had under him the 29th Punjabis, the 130th Baluchis, and the 2nd and 3rd Kashmiris.

fight that Selous, the famous hunter, was killed on his 65th birthday.

Beves meanwhile was steadily moving on to the Rufiji. He had sent on ahead an advance party of scouts and the Faridkot Sappers with four Berthon boats on the night of the 2nd to seize a crossing of the river. This party had already marched 20 miles that day, but they pressed on during the night and at dawn on the 3rd arrived on the Rufiji. They met with no opposition. They got the boats into the water, crossed over, and dug themselves in on the other side. On the morning of the 4th the whole of the Cape Corps were across the river.

On the 5th Sheppard reached Kibambawe, but the enemy had already crossed the river and had destroyed the bridge behind them. The river was here 800 yards wide, and Sheppard could make no move while it was daylight. But at night he got across a double company of the 30th Punjabis<sup>1</sup> and two machine guns unperceived by the enemy and in spite of the hippopotami which attacked the boats. These troops lay hidden during the next day, but in the night more troops were crossed over, and by the morning of the 7th the 30th Punjabis were all over. The enemy were now aware of their presence and attacked, but the Punjabis aided by artillery fire were able to hold their own till nightfall, when more troops were crossed over to their assistance. We were then firmly established on the south bank of the Rufiji river at two points, and Beves's troops had struck across at the enemy's line of retreat so that he was forced to move once more.

Every effort was made by Smuts to join hands with the force advancing from Kilwa and so cut off the enemy's retreat. But it is practically impossible in the African bush, where the range of vision is so limited, to enclose an enemy determined to escape. Von Lettow again managed to elude our force and escape into the mountains.

At this point General Smuts was recalled to represent South Africa in the Imperial Conference, and sailed from Dar es Salaam on the 20th of January. Almost immediately afterwards the rainy season set in and lasted till June. All further moves were impossible, and the enemy was thereby enabled to fall back unmolested to the south.

<sup>1</sup> This battalion had only recently arrived from India.



This retreat to the south it had been found impossible to cut off, for the larger operations which Smuts had planned did not entirely fulfil expectations.<sup>1</sup> As we have already seen, the attacks by the enemy on the Portuguese had forced them over the Ruvuma river. Farther west General Northey had advanced and attempted to surround the forces in his front at Mfrika, but they had succeeded in escaping from him towards Mahenge. They were followed across the Ruhudje river but we were unable completely to cut them off. Van Deventer was to have operated from Iringa, a hundred miles north-west of Mahenge, but owing to heavy rains he had found it impossible to get forward the reserve of supplies, and he was obliged therefore to send the bulk of his troops back to rail-head and retain only three battalions and a squadron of mounted infantry. On the 25th of December he advanced south<sup>2</sup> and on the 26th attacked, but during that night the Germans broke up into small parties and escaped through the bush. There had been heavy rain for some days past. Every nullah was a river. The troops were constantly wading through them breast high. For ten days all mechanical transport had been at a standstill. In these circumstances it was impossible to carry through the operations to a successful issue.

At the end of May 1917 General Van Deventer took over the chief command. He, like Smuts, attempted encircling movements with the object of rounding up the German forces. On the western side Northey and the Belgians were to converge on Mahenge, while columns from Kilwa and Lindi on the coast were to push up from the east. Sheppard's old 1st East African Brigade formed the nucleus of the Lindi Force, while the 33rd Punjabis, 40th Pathans, 55th Rifles, 129th Baluchis, and 22nd and 27th Mountain Batteries were all in the Kilwa force, under General Hannington. The enemy's chief depots of ammunition were believed to be formed near the coast, and he might be forced either to fight for this ammunition or else to abandon it. He chose to fight for it, and on the 19th of

<sup>1</sup> Had anticipations been fulfilled it was proposed to withdraw most of the Indian troops to Egypt, while for a time it was contemplated sending them to Aden to undertake more active operations against the Turks in the Yemen than had hitherto been possible. But as von Lettow had escaped capture, the Indian contingent had to remain in East Africa and even to be slightly increased.

<sup>2</sup> India was represented in his force by the 17th Infantry and part of the 28th Mountain Battery.

July at Narungombe, south-west of Kilwa, a very stubborn combat took place. In this the 33rd Punjabis, though so reduced as only to form one machine-gun company, did invaluable work, and the 40th Pathans, though they suffered severely in a German counter-attack, made a very effective attempt to outflank the German right. It was perhaps about the hardest fight of the whole campaign, and certainly caused the Germans to retire somewhat hurriedly. They fell back upon Nahungu, which we did not capture till the 28th of September.

The interval had as usual been spent in reorganizing, in making preparations especially as regards transport arrangements for the next advance, and in reconnoitring, a very necessary process in a practically unknown country where such maps as existed were far from accurate. The plan of this next move was to be an advance from the north against the enemy by two columns based on Kilwa, while the Lindi force pushed south-west up the Lukuledi river to intercept his retreat to the Ruvuma and the Portuguese frontier. The move began on September 19th; there was sharp fighting on the Mbemkuru river on the 26th and 27th, followed by the passage of the river on October 1st, and more fighting in which the 22nd Mountain Battery was very heavily engaged, as was also the remnant of the 129th Baluchis. About this period the 25th Cavalry made a most successful raid higher up the Mbemkuru, destroying large depots of food which the enemy had collected and contributing thereby greatly to diminution of his freedom of movement.

Further severe fighting took place between the Mbemkuru and Lukuledi rivers. The force from Kilwa was now to the westward of von Lettow, and was between him and the force under Colonel Tafel which had been holding out in the Mahenge area and was trying to rejoin the main body. The position occupied by the Kilwa columns proved important later on, though the attempts to catch von Lettow between them and the Lindi column just failed after some more fighting in which the 55th Rifles did good service and the ever-enduring 129th Baluchis took a strong position on Chiwata hill. There were four days of stubborn fighting in difficult country, the water problem was as acute as ever, and together with transport troubles delayed the progress of the enveloping movements.

While von Lettow had been displaying courage in fighting and skill in eluding the forces operating to capture him, his lieutenant in the west—Colonel Tafel—had fared less favourably. With a force of 2,000 rifles he had been covering Mahenge. But he was attacked by the Belgians and driven from his defences, and Mahenge and the stores and munitions so vitally important to the Germans, now on their last resources, fell into the hands of the Belgians. Tafel skilfully evaded the British forces designed to cut off his retreat and marched across country from Mahenge in a south-westerly direction, hoping, as arranged between them, to join hands with his chief, von Lettow, near the Portuguese border at Newala. But when he arrived on the Bangala river, some distance west of Newala, with about 1,400 men, he found no signs of von Lettow. He found himself on the contrary in the vicinity of a British force, the Kilwa columns. He made a move towards Newala in an attempt to join up with von Lettow, but was checked on the 26th of November by the 129th Baluchis. They were under 200 strong and much outnumbered by Tafel's force, but they put up a most determined fight which had the effect of convincing Tafel that the game was up. Believing himself abandoned by von Lettow and incapable of contending against the British forces who were now drawn round him, he surrendered with all his men on the 28th of November.

But had Tafel reached Newala he would not have found von Lettow there. Hard pressed on both flanks, he had kept his luck to the end, and when the 55th Rifles on November 21st occupied Newala it was to find that von Lettow had passed through twenty-four hours earlier and was on his way to the Ruvuma. But he had made his last stand. Nearly 1,500 of his force were surrounded and laid down their arms. Thereafter he was merely a fugitive.

Yet, if he was only a fugitive, he could cause an infinity of trouble. He still had with him 320 Europeans and 2,500 Askari. Van Deventer had planned to prevent his crossing the Ruvuma, and a Portuguese force of 900 men was meant to watch the crossing. Unfortunately they allowed von Lettow to cross unhindered, and the German general not only crossed the river but attacked the Portuguese and captured their arms and ammunition. Thereby he acquired a new lease of fighting life, and marching rapidly southward on Fort Nanguari, the

depot and post commanding the chief pass on the road from Mozambique to the lakes, he captured that also and with it a further haul of supplies and ammunition. The Portuguese became in fact not a source of danger but a source of supply to him.

To follow him now was hopeless. The rainy season had again set in, and pursuit had to be abandoned for the time being. But Van Deventer had by no means given it up entirely. He utilized Lake Nyasa for transporting troops southward. With these he moved into Portuguese territory from the southern end of the lake, surprised von Lettow, and drove him northward again. It would be tedious to follow von Lettow in all his turnings and twistings, first in Portuguese territory, then in German East Africa, and finally in Rhodesia. He was never able to make a stand; it was not of course his object. His object was to maintain his force intact and keep us employing considerable forces as long as the war lasted. When he crossed into Portuguese territory the conquest of German East Africa was at an end. To run him down was now for the most part a problem of transport, and did not call for the services of any very large force. The King's African Rifles were quite equal to doing all that was needed, and it was decided not to employ any Indian Army units in the further operations against him. Accordingly they were drawn back gradually to the coast, and in the early months of 1918 returned one by one to India. The 130th Baluchis had already left in October 1917, and by April 1918 practically all the Indian troops were home.

In the autumn of 1918 von Lettow appeared before Abercorn in Rhodesia, but his attack on the two companies which were entrenched there failed. On the 8th of November he arrived at Kasama, and when the Armistice was signed on the 11th of November 1918 he was out on the veldt.

On the 25th of November he formally surrendered at Abercorn. There were then with him 155 Europeans and 1,168 natives. He had certainly succeeded in his original object of holding up much superior numbers of his country's enemies. For four years in a depressing tropical climate and with everything against him he had fought with skill, courage, and resource, and—most notable feature of all—had under these circumstances been able to keep his native soldiers attached

to him to the very end. All that a soldier could be and do he had been and done. But, in spite of all this, the Germans had lost the colony in which they took the greatest pride, and to this result, so satisfactory to us, India had made a special contribution. If South Africa had contributed largely to the successful assumption of the offensive in 1916, and if West Africa and the locally raised King's African Rifles had borne an ever-increasing share in the burden in 1917, it was on the Indian Army that the bulk of the defensive work had fallen in 1914 and 1915. Indian units had taken a large part in the campaign of 1916, and some of the units which had helped to drive the Germans back from Kilimanjaro had been not perhaps in at the death but in the penultimate stage of the hunt, the expulsion of von Lettow from his colony. Including Imperial Service Troops over thirty fighting Indian units served in East Africa, their losses in action had been heavy, their losses from sickness heavier, their invaliding rate very high. Yet though reduced to skeletons by fever and dysentery they had struggled bravely on. Moreover, not only had India sent troops but also almost the whole of the transport and supplies for the British force. German East Africa is therefore to a peculiar degree associated with India when we consider the part which India took in the war.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This chapter has mainly been taken from the official dispatches.

## CHAPTER X

### CONCLUSION

ON November 11th, 1918, the Armistice was signed. The war was over. The victory was won. And to that victory India had made no mean contribution. At the signing of the Armistice India was represented in France by only artillery and A.S.C. drivers and by Indian Coolie Corps. But in Palestine and Mesopotamia Indian troops were in force; if they had been withdrawn from East Africa, they were beginning to arrive at Salonika, where they had not as yet served; and they supplied the bulk of the force employed in the new theatre of operations in North Persia. The effort which India had put forth, if compared with what Germany, France, or Great Britain had made, and if compared with the numbers of her population, might not excite astonishment. Out of a population which at the time of the war must have amounted to 320 millions, India put hardly one million into the field; and her contribution in munitions would be slighter still in comparison. Still, for India it was magnificent. India was not fighting for her very life as France, England, and Germany were. Nor could she feel the war as acutely as those closer to the scene of action; she was thousands of miles away, and for some time at least was actually benefiting in a material way from the war; large sums of money were being spent in India by the Allies for the purchase of food and raw material; the producers of wheat, oil-seeds, cotton, jute, coal, iron, were benefiting largely; and though the losses of the Indian Army were considerable,<sup>1</sup> they were slight when distributed over so large a population; they could not affect India in the same way as the much larger losses borne by the smaller populations of European countries affected them. There could not therefore be the same vivid interest in the war and the same stern determination to see it through that there was in France and Great Britain. It is all the more wonderful therefore that

<sup>1</sup> The official figure is 64,449 killed and died, with 69,214 wounded [cf. *Statistics of the Military Effort of the British Empire*, p. 237].

India put forth the effort she did ; and when we compare what she actually accomplished with what even those who knew her best before the war would have expected of her the achievement was truly marvellous.

For it must be again emphatically noted that the Indian Army was not organized for operations outside the Indian Empire except immediately beyond its frontier. India was expected to undertake the defence of India. But it was not expected to send armies to distant countries. It had not therefore either the organization or the equipment for that which it was called upon to carry out during the war ; and if flaws, defects, and deficiencies were only too apparent during the course of the war, now the war is over what stands out is the magnificence of the achievement. This achievement is the more remarkable because, except at the very first, Indian troops were for the most part lacking their natural leaders. For a century and a half they had been accustomed to look to British officers to lead them, and such leadership was especially necessary when fighting against a European foe or foes led and inspired by Europeans. But the number of British officers who took the field with an Indian battalion was only twelve, and the losses among them—marked men as they were—had been terribly heavy in the early days in France. New officers had therefore to be found, and the officers found were mostly new not only to the Indian Army but to military service altogether. So the difficulties of getting a full military effort out of India were vastly greater than they would have been if large reserves of British officers knowing and known by Indian troops had been available.

So much for India's effort during the war. But what of the results ? How has the war affected India ? Especially how is India's unity with the Empire affected ? These are questions we must answer in conclusion. No one can say that the results are what was expected. It might have been expected that after a victorious war in which India had not—considering her huge population—suffered any grievous loss in manhood and had suffered little or no material loss, she would be contented, prosperous, and happy. It might have been expected further that when the British had played such a glorious part and at the close of the war stood at Baghdad and Mosul, Jerusalem and Aleppo, at the gates of Constantinople and on the banks of

the Rhine, and when the whole German fleet was in their hands, the prestige of the British in India would never have stood higher or anything like so high. Yet the amazing fact is that India was less contented after the war than it was before, and British prestige was lower; though whether this will affect the permanent unity of India with the Empire we will presently inquire.

Many and various were the causes which tended to unsettle India. Perhaps the main cause was the fact that we were fighting for freedom and against domination. She had helped Great Britain to repel the Germans and keep Great Britain free from foreign domination. Why then should not she herself be free from British domination? This was the unsettling thought which ran like lightning through the Indian mind, and certain events helped to add momentum to it. First in importance was the Irish rebellion. If Ireland, one of the component parts of the very heart of the Empire, saw fit to rise and endeavour to free itself from the Empire—making this effort of dissociation at the extreme crisis of the most critical war in which the Empire had ever been engaged—might not India also be well advised in dissociating herself? Yet another unsettling event was the Russian revolution. The Irish rebellion had failed. But the Russian revolution had succeeded. The Russian people had risen, turned out their rulers, and established themselves—or may have seemed to the outside world to have established themselves—in the seat of authority. Russia had dispensed with emperors, governors, ruling classes; and was governing itself through the—apparently—freely chosen representatives of the people. Why should not India do the same? This was another disturbing thought.

Next, there were not lacking agents to propagate these ideas and press them home, and stir up every bit of bad blood that existed, or could be made to exist, between British and Indians. The group of men who had succeeded in seizing power in Russia were actuated by an idea which in their view could only be successful if not Russia alone but the whole world shared in and acted on it. For the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' to be successful, the proletariat of the whole world must dictate. There was little chance of getting the proletariat of India to join effectively in any such scheme. But if England could be given trouble in India it would be so much



easier to break down the opposition in England to the world dictatorship of the proletariat. So the Bolsheviks in every insidious way strove to unsettle the Indian mind and instigate Indians against British.

Then the Mohammedans of India were unsettled. They number nearly eighty millions, and they had always had in their hearts a certain compunction about fighting against Turkey. There is a strong religious bond between all Mohammedans as there is between Christians or between Hindus, and when the claims of religion and nationality conflict there is much disturbance of spirit. In ordinary times there is not so very much interest taken by the Mohammedans of India in the Turks. In fact a great many of the Indian Mohammedans are descendants of men and women who were forcibly converted to Mohammedanism, and retain much of their original Hindu habits and attitude of mind. But when the outstanding ruler in the Mohammedan world was not only attacked but crushed in the final downfall of the whole Germanic League, then Mohammedan feeling throughout the world was stirred. The Turks had acted as fools in throwing in their lot with the Germans—this was allowed, and no one would have objected to their receiving any ordinary punishment. But when it came to the Sultan of Turkey, the Caliph, the supreme personage in Islam, being reduced to the position of a petty ruler in Asia Minor, shorn of his Arabian possessions, of Palestine, Syria, most of Thrace, and perhaps even of Constantinople itself, then Mohammedans everywhere—not excluding India—quivered with excitement and many with deep resentment. This was another inevitable result of the war and a most disturbing factor in India.

Lastly was the cry of 'self-determination'. In the closing year of the war, when the terms of peace were being more freely and openly discussed, the doctrine of self-determination was being preached with ever-increasing emphasis. Here was another unsettling thought for India. India was a nation. If other nations were to have the right of self-determination, why should not India have the same right? If Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, and others were to be allowed to choose their own destiny, why should not India choose hers?

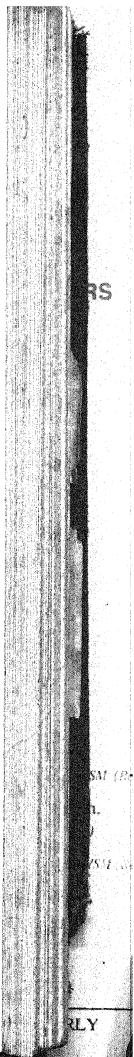
No wonder with all these stirring questions in the air there was unsettlement and unrest in the mind of India, and

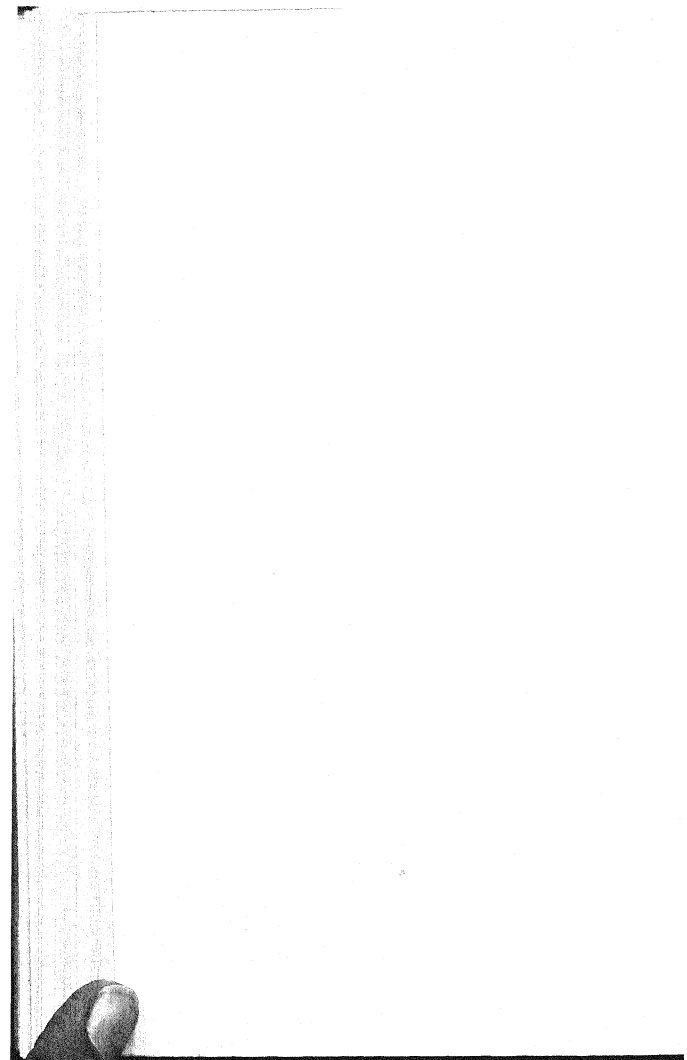
doubtless there was also another thought at work. It has been a very common experience after this war that every nation has had an inclination to sink back into itself, and be by itself alone and quiet for a time and unworried by any neighbour however great a friend that neighbour may be. All the nations had had enough of fighting one group and mixing on unusually intimate terms with another group. They were tired and exhausted and irritable, and wanted to have a rest from one another. Perhaps India was in something of the same mood at the end of the war. Perhaps Great Britain was too. Hence from this cause alone there may have been much kicking against the pricks.

So there were, in all truth, sufficient causes of trouble, but it must not be supposed that the responsible Government of the country took no notice of the state of popular feeling or no measures to meet the aspirations which were springing up around them. The British Government in India always had held the intention of associating Indians with them in the government of the country, and it was only a question of pace how soon India should be granted responsible government. The Minto-Morley Reform scheme inaugurated only a few years before the war was a big step in that direction, and even while the war was in progress the Government contemplated another and greater step. Early in 1916 Lord Hardinge prepared a scheme to meet the rising aspirations of the Indians, and Lord Chelmsford, as soon as he came to India as Viceroy in 1916, set about elaborating another scheme. The Indians were growing impatient, and with their quick impulsive natures were clamouring for full self-government, on the Dominion model, straight away. But in so vast a country as India, with so numerous and varied a population, and while war on so stupendous a scale was actually being waged, it was impossible to rush a constitutional reform scheme of such magnitude through at high speed. Consultation and deliberation were essential, and it was not till the end of 1916 that Lord Chelmsford's scheme could be completed and dispatched to England. Then followed further examination and deliberation while Mr. Austen Chamberlain was still at the India Office ; and it was not till August 20th, 1917, that Mr. Montagu, who a few weeks previously had succeeded Mr. Chamberlain, was able to announce in the House of Commons the final decision of the Cabinet.



LORD CHELMSFORD





It would have made matters easier in India if this decision had been made more swiftly, and it would have been more impressive if when made it had been announced on a fitting occasion, with fitting ceremonial, and by the most fitting personage. For it was a decision of momentous consequence to both India and the Empire, and its importance should have been strongly emphasized. As it was it was baldly announced by the Secretary of State for India in answer to a question in the House of Commons. It was in brief that responsible self-government was to be the goal of British policy in India. Indians were to be increasingly associated with the British in every branch of the administration, and more than that there was to be a gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire. That is to say, responsible self-government was not to be given at once but only in successive stages, and it was added that the British Government and the Government of India must be the judges of the time and measure of each advance. On the other hand, substantial steps were to be taken at once—or rather as soon as possible—to bring the principle into effect. This announcement did, in a sense, only put into definite words what had been for years past the underlying idea in British policy in India. But the importance of the announcement lay in the fact that the British did now for the first time definitely and most formally state the goal at which they were aiming and intended to back their words by deeds.

Very soon after the announcement Mr. Montagu went to India to work out in conjunction with Lord Chelmsford the details of the scheme, and eventually the full scheme was passed through Parliament and in a little more than a year from the termination of the war was brought into operation. Into the details of that scheme it is unnecessary to enter. It is sufficient to state that it did associate Indians with the British very much more largely in the administration of the country and did form a very big step forward in the direction of responsible self-government of the Canadian or Australian type. It did not meet the approval of the extremists whose eyes were fixed on the fabled golden age when every Indian ruler was wise and all Indians were good and India from end to end was happy and contented. But it went a great deal farther than

any one before the war had contemplated, and was in any case evidence that the British Government were making some attempt to apply to India the principles for which they were fighting in the war. There was trouble enough in India at the end of the war, but the Government of India were of opinion that there would have been a great deal more had not some such step been taken to meet the expectation of the people.

In another direction also the British Government sought to satisfy Indian aspirations. Indian troops were fighting alongside British troops from the Home Country and the Dominions in every theatre of war, and it was felt that India ought to be admitted, with the Dominions, to the Supreme War Council and share in the responsibility for the general direction of the war. So Sir Satyendra Sinha, representing British India, and the Maharaja of Bikaner, representing the Indian States, were sent to represent India, with the Secretary of State for India, at the first Imperial War Council. Sir Satyendra Sinha, afterwards Lord Sinha, was an Indian of great distinction and remarkable ability, who first made his name at the Calcutta Bar and was the first Indian member of the Viceroy's Executive Council. He had also been President of the Indian National Congress, and in that capacity exercised a sound and moderating influence over the extremists. The Maharaja of Bikaner was a chief of very ancient lineage, a man who had displayed interest and ability in both political and military affairs, and had on the occasion of the great war and on other occasions put the military resources of his state freely at the disposal of the British Government and himself served with his troops and on the staff. These two men, the one a high-spirited Rajput soldier, the other a keen-witted Bengali lawyer, were each in his way peculiarly well adapted to represent India among the statesmen and soldiers of the Empire, and Indians at once recognized that by their presence in the Councils of the Empire the status of India had been definitely and openly raised in the eyes of the world.

This impression was accentuated when India was called upon to send representatives not only to the Imperial Councils for waging the war but also to the Allied Council for settling the peace. India could feel that she in truth was regarded as an integral part of the Empire and was acquiring an interest in shaping the Empire's destiny. At the great Peace Con-

ference of all the Allies as at the War Council of the constituent members of the Empire she had, through her representatives, the opportunity of presenting and urging India's point of view and India's interests; while, as further evidence of the desire of the British Government to associate Indians with them, Sir Satyendra Sinha was created a peer with a seat in the House of Lords and appointed Under-Secretary of State for India and subsequently, under the new reform scheme, Governor of Behar and Orissa.

Finally, as a direct result of the war, a step of the highest importance, though fraught with the utmost risk, was taken when Indians were admitted into the commissioned ranks of the Indian Army on the same status as British officers. This was a matter which had from time to time been considered for more than fifty years. There were many obvious advantages. There were as many less obvious dangers. It would seem absurd on the face of it that a veteran Indian officer in an Indian regiment should be under the orders of the most junior and untried British subaltern; and it was obviously bad in principle that while an Indian in the civil line could, like Lord Sinha, rise to a position on the Viceroy's Executive Council and even sit on the Imperial War Council, yet an Indian in military service could not rise to the position of a British lieutenant. The main difficulty was that British subalterns stoutly objected to serving under Indians in the life-and-death conditions of active service. In individual cases a particular British subaltern would have no objection to serving under a particular Indian of known and proved military capacity and military spirit. But subalterns in general were highly reluctant to serving—in actual warfare—under Indians in general who might be placed over them. A further difficulty was that when British and Indian troops were acting together, the command of British soldiers might devolve upon an Indian officer, and it was by no means certain how far British soldiers, in the rough and tumble of stern warfare, would accept this position. However, in spite of these weighty objections the step was taken. Approved Indians were given the opportunity of competing for admission to the military college at Sandhurst, and, like English boys, of receiving commissions in the Indian Army.

Whether these steps, great as they are, will really satisfy

the Indians and make and keep them contented to remain within the Empire it is too early yet to say. Extremists will always pester for more, it is certain; and it may be safely assumed that the time will never be when extremists cease to clamour. But apart from men of this type, who never are and never would be satisfied but only exist for hearing their own voices, there are many thoughtful persons—British and Indian—who consider that the two peoples differ so fundamentally in their deepest spiritual attitude that there never can be any real union between the British and Indian races. The civilization, the ideas and ideals, the whole outlook on life are so different that it is believed that the one could never unite with the other. The British are supposed to value most in life all those things which contribute to material prosperity—money, railways, telegraphs, motor cars. The Indians are supposed to value most in life all that ministers to spiritual prosperity, the ideal of poverty, resignation, contemplation; and between these twain there can, it is said, be no true intimacy of union.

Differences of course there are between Indians and British. Differences there are, too, between one Englishman and another, and between one Indian and another. No two Englishmen and no two Indians are in all respects exactly alike. But the differences do not preclude unity, and the war has shown examples of unity between Indians and British which remorselessly shatter the theory that men of different civilization and different spiritual outlook cannot unite together.

The Englishmen who most admire motor cars and railways and big deposits in the bank value as highly as any Indian the spiritual qualities of high courage and fine comradeship. In hundreds of cases that courage and comradeship was displayed by British officers serving with Indian regiments, and Indians had the opportunity of observing at the closest possible quarters that British, however much they may value material progress, could yet display high spiritual qualities. Lockhart Elliot and Hodson of the Guides, Kelly of the 23rd Pioneers, and many others had shown a devotion to their regiment, to the profession of arms, to their country, which compelled the admiration and drew the affections of Indians as no political reforms could ever do; and British officers were not one whit less admiring of the magnificent courage and keen loyalty shown by Indians. Differences of every conceiv-



able kind there were between British and Indians in these regiments—difference of race, of religion, of up-bringing, of outlook. But just as real as the differences was the unity which existed between them, the unity which comes of loyalty of man to man in a cause of common interest to them all, and of valuing above all else, in the supreme moments of life, the same high qualities which are common to the whole human race.

This strong tie of loyal comradeship between British and Indian will not lightly disappear. Hundreds of the best British officers and Indian officers and men have been killed. But by their very death they have accentuated the tradition, and the tradition will remain. Having been it must ever be. Only the occasion and the man will be needed to call forth the ancient comradeship, and only wisdom is required to cause it to permeate from the army into all parts of the body politic. And as shining examples of that spirit may be taken, on the one hand, that officer of the Indian Army who mainly through the exercise of it had such unique success in leading the young Australian armies to war and who is now Commander-in-Chief in India; on the other, that fine old Rajput chief who, in spite of his seventy years, insisted upon sharing with his British and Indian comrades the hardships and dangers of the battle-fields of France. There is no Indian who would not feel himself attached to Birdwood. There is no Englishman who would not have loved Sir Pertab Singh. The two personify that which is in common between Indians and British, and which unites them in spite of the differences which distinguish but need not separate them.

Lastly, as a focus and rallying-point for all that makes for unity between India and the Empire is the British Throne. Simply as an institution the Throne is of incalculable value for bringing to a point the collective sentiment and the common interest and aspirations of all the peoples which compose the Empire. But that value has been immeasurably increased by the personal qualities of the present Royal Family. Of that something has already been said. Here it need only be noted that the self-sacrificing activities not only of the King but of every single member of the Royal Family during the war, and the feeling and understanding interest they showed in India and in the welfare and behaviour of Indian troops, strengthened, deepened, and intensified that strong feeling

of attachment to the Throne which Queen Victoria had established and King Edward had successfully maintained.

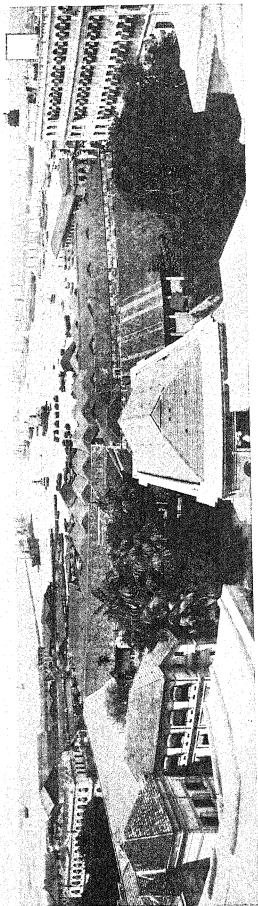
Indians are getting to feel more and more that the King is *their* King just as much as he is an Englishman's King, and, however urgent and importunate is the cry for self-government, only the smallest whisper is heard asking for separation from the monarchy—a whisper not louder indeed than might be heard in England itself and of just as little significance.

These are the powerful influences making for unity and which go to counteract the strong disrupting tendencies. But a mightier influence still may be even now emerging as a direct result of the war. The heart of England has always beaten to the heart of India: it may be that the war has also so stirred the soul of England that in a common aspiration after the loftiest things of the spirit India and Great Britain may eventually find their firmest bond of union.

PART V  
CEYLON

BY  
THE EDITOR

TRANSPORTS OUTSIDE COLOMBO HARBOUR



## CEYLON<sup>1</sup>

THE island of Ceylon, rather larger in area than three-quarters of Ireland, had in 1914 a population not far short of that of Ireland, approximating to  $4\frac{3}{4}$  millions. Some  $2\frac{3}{4}$  millions were Sinhalese, there were a million Tamils, nearly half of them labourers on the plantations, and the Moham-medans or Moors numbered fully  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a million. The Europeans, exclusive of military and shipping, were under 8,000, including—at the census of 1911—177 Germans.

Ceylon holds the premier place among the non-self-governing colonies. Almost joined to India by Adam's Bridge, it has, nevertheless, except for the first few years after it became a British possession, always been administered as a separate unit. It is a planting colony rich in tea, coconuts, rubber, rice, and other tropical products, and has a valuable mineral resource in plumbago. Colombo, the meeting-place for ships to and from Australia in one direction and the Far East in another, is at once a great emporium of trade and a garrisoned and fortified Imperial coaling station, having supplanted, with the aid of modern engineering, the historic natural harbour of Trincomali on the eastern coast, which, a little more than a century ago, gave to the island its prime importance in the eyes of the competing nations of the world. Ceylon may be summed up as the attractive home of a rich and progressive community, composed of divers elements, with a past of singular interest, a geographical position which alone would ensure its value, with great sources of wealth in the soil and with hill regions in which Europeans and their families can live and thrive. The war found it with ample revenue and prospering greatly.

In 1914 there was an elected element in the Legislative Council, which has since been enlarged. When the war began the Governor was the present Lord Chalmers, G.C.B., who, before he took up the government of the Colony in July 1913,

<sup>1</sup> In the compilation of this account the Editor has been greatly indebted to Sir R. E. Stubbs, K.C.M.G., to Mr. T. Reid of the Ceylon Civil Service, and to Mr. A. J. Denison of the Ceylon Association in London.

had been the head of the Home Civil Service, Permanent Secretary to the Treasury. He left Ceylon at the beginning of December 1915 and was succeeded in the middle of April 1916 by Sir John Anderson, G.C.M.G., K.C.B., who, after having been Governor of the Straits Settlements, had returned to the Colonial Office as Permanent Under-Secretary of State. When the latter died in Ceylon, after a long and trying illness, on the 24th of March 1918, Sir William Manning, G.C.M.G., K.B.E., C.B., who had been Governor of Jamaica, was appointed to the vacant post, reaching Colombo in September 1918, two months before the end of the war. In the intervals the Government was administered by the Colonial Secretary, Mr. (now Sir) R. E. Stubbs, who, like Sir John Anderson, had been a member of the Colonial Office and who was subsequently appointed Governor of Hong Kong. It is noteworthy that, almost throughout the war, Ceylon was governed by men who had been trained in the Home Civil Service. Before he laid down the government the war had been sadly brought home to Sir Robert Chalmers, as he then was, by the loss of both his sons, while in the case of his successor the strain of the war was most manfully borne by a man who was stricken with incurable disease.

There are some few thousands of Malays in Ceylon whose ancestors are reputed to have been brought in by the Dutch, while they held the island, for military service; and they formed the bulk of the old Ceylon Rifle Regiments, the last of which was disbanded in 1873. The result of the Royal Commission which, under the chairmanship of Lord Carnarvon, in the years 1879-82, considered and reported upon the defence of British possessions and commerce abroad, was to include Ceylon in the list of Imperial coaling stations. Colombo was accordingly fortified, and manned with an Imperial garrison. But, side by side with the Regulars, there was, when the war came, an appreciable number of volunteers in the island, numbering rather over 2,000 in all. Fully half of this number was included in the Ceylon Light Infantry, which was the principal Ceylonese corps; there was a body of volunteer Garrison Artillery, Ceylon Mounted Rifles, and a Planters' Rifle Corps. The Civil Police numbered about 2,600 of all ranks.

Ceylon had sent a small white contingent to the South

African War, and almost immediately after the greater crisis came, the Colonial Government arranged to send to the front a double company of European infantry, armed, equipped, and paid by the colony. The men had practically all been members either of the Planters' Rifle Corps or of the Mounted Rifles, the Planters' Corps not being composed exclusively of planters, but including also a considerable proportion of Government servants, Colombo business-men, and others. They were trained for a short time at the up-country camp at Diyatalawa, and left for Europe in November 1914. Turkey having come into the war, when they reached Egypt they were detained for service there, and were attached as a fifth company to the Wellington infantry battalion of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force in the Anzac division. The high standard of the men of whom the contingent was composed had a disastrous effect on the fortunes of the contingent as a whole, for, as one and another received commissions in other units, the total numbers shrank, especially as men were constantly leaving the island on their own initiative to join the Army in England, and, though a remnant of the original contingent served in the Dardanelles under Sir William Birdwood, within a year it had ceased to exist. The cost of the contingent to the Ceylon Treasury was over Rs. 353,000.

This effort was confined to Europeans. Early in the war an attempt was made to organize a contingent of Ceylonese for service in Egypt, the War Office not being at the time prepared to accept them for service elsewhere, but it did not materialize owing to the difficulties of securing a sufficient number of volunteers of suitable physique as tried by the War Office standard. Some Ceylonese, however, went to Europe to enlist, a few at their own expense; and in spite of reluctance to employ Asiatics, other than the Indian Army, on the main front in the earlier part of the war, for reasons of climate and physique, Ceylonese found their way into the Army, into the Coldstreams, for instance, and the Royal Fusiliers, and served well. Towards the end of the war, when men were badly wanted, any objection to the employment of Ceylonese in the main theatres of war was waived, but by this time enthusiasm for volunteering had cooled, and the end came without a coloured contingent representative of Ceylon appearing in the fighting line. Yet the number of men

which Ceylon sent to fight was appreciable, estimated at 1,573 Europeans, a very large proportion of the Europeans of fighting age in the island, and 609 Ceylonese, and their record bore witness to their quality. Of the Europeans 285 are known to have been killed and 355 wounded. Of the Ceylonese 35 were killed, 13 drowned en route for war service, and 82 wounded. The Ceylonese who lost their lives by drowning were among 49 who left Colombo in December 1915 to enlist in the United Kingdom and were on board the *Villa de la Ciotat*, sunk by a torpedo in the Mediterranean on Christmas Eve in that year.

The Government service, exclusive of the police, sent men to fight overseas, some of whom were killed, including Lieutenant Horsfall, V.C., a member of the Public Works Department. The police were represented at the front by 15 European officers and sergeants, all that could possibly be spared, and 7 native sergeants and constables. Many applications for active service were received from members of the force, but could not be granted, and, in order to enable five of the officers to leave for fighting service, five residents in the Colony, for physical or other reasons unable to leave, acted as substitutes in the police.

In 1917, on the suggestion of Mr. A. H. Nathanielsz, a district engineer of the Public Works Department, an offer was made to the Army Council to form a Ceylon Sanitary Company for service in Mesopotamia. The offer was gratefully accepted, a Ceylonese company of the strength of 105 of all ranks was completed in July, 1917, and, after a short period of training in Ceylon, landed at Basra on the 27th of September. Its duties were the supervision of sanitary arrangements at the advance base of the Expeditionary Force in Mesopotamia. Its cost was borne upon colonial funds, the efficiency of the corps was proved by calls from the military authorities for additional men, 55 being sent in 1918, and at the end of 1918 the strength of the unit was 153. The cost to the colony was nearly Rs. 200,000, and the president of the selection committee was a native of Ceylon, of Tamil race, Major David Rockwood, commanding the Ceylon Medical Corps.

Ceylonese were also employed in Mesopotamia in connexion with water transport. In the autumn of 1916, in response to a request from the Government of India, a Colombo River-

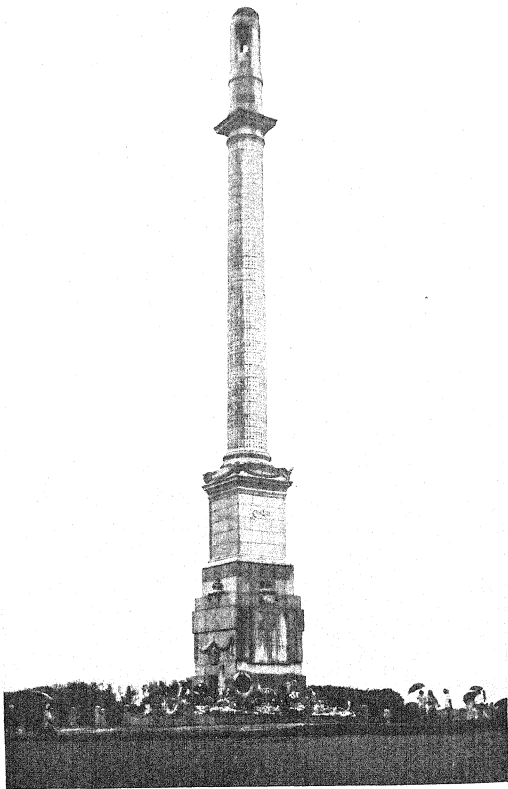


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THE CEYLON WAR MEMORIAL, ON GALLE FACE  
COLOMBO

Craft Committee was constituted, presided over by the chairman of the Colombo Port Commission, to assist in providing vessels, plant, and men for the Mesopotamian campaign. A large number of men were sent, and not only to Mesopotamia, but to East Africa also. The total number recruited under the scheme was 1,183, but the cost in this case did not fall upon the Island Treasury.

Among the distinctions to be credited to Ceylon for fighting service were four Victoria Crosses at least, and five if Lieutenant Moor, V.C., born in Ceylon and the son of a former member of the Ceylon Civil Service, is included. Two of the recipients, Major S. W. Loudoun Shand and 2nd Lieutenant B. A. Horsfall, were killed in action; a third, Lieutenant-Colonel C. E. Hudson, also received the D.S.O. with bar, and the M.C. and the Croix de Guerre; and the fourth was Lieutenant A. W. Shelton Agar, R.N., who gained the distinction in July, 1919, in the naval operations in the Baltic. The D.S.O.s numbered 19, five of them with bar; the M.C.s 114, one with 2 bars, seven with 1; there were 7 Croix de Guerre, two of them with star; 1 D.S.C.; 5 M.M.s; 2 Air Force Crosses; 1 Legion of Honour; 2 Order of the White Eagle; and 2 Italian Silver Medals. In proportion to the numbers sent to fight, the death roll and the list of honours were alike singularly high.<sup>1</sup> Of those who went to fight, many were helped on their way by a Passage Fund started by the *Times of Ceylon* which realized over 123,000 rupees, including a subscription from the Planters' Association One Day's Pay Fund of nearly 21,000 rupees, and the Colonial Government spent Rs. 170,000 in providing passages, 249 second-class passages in all being provided from the funds of the Colony.

While thus sending a certain number of her citizens to service overseas—a notably large proportion of the European residents of military age—Ceylon, perhaps, contributed most effectively to the cause of the Empire by providing for the defence of the island by her own volunteer forces, thereby gradually releasing for active service at the front the Regular troops which formed the garrison before the war. The Regular gunners and engineers of the garrison were early withdrawn, being replaced by semi-trained men, who in turn were sent on

<sup>1</sup> See *The Ceylon Roll of Honour, a record of Service in the great war 1914-18*, published at Colombo by the *Times of Ceylon* Company Ltd.

when further trained, the gaps being continuously filled by volunteers. The Ceylon Engineer Volunteers, a European corps, took charge of the search-lights, and the Ceylon Artillery Volunteers, a Ceylonese corps but with a preponderance of British officers, supplied the place of the Regular gunners at the batteries. In January 1916 the Indian battalion of the garrison was taken away, and from that time onward the work of the infantry was discharged by the Ceylon Light Infantry, a sufficient number of companies of that corps being mobilized from time to time as occasion required. During the greater part of the war a portion of the volunteer medical corps was mobilized to take charge of the military hospital.

Though Ceylon was not in the war zone, it was in close touch with the war. The port of Colombo holds an outstanding position from the point of view of trade routes and sea communications. All through the war years it was a port of call for Australian and New Zealand troops and detachments from the Far East going to the front, and for returning wounded and disabled soldiers. In the early months of the war, while German raiders were still at large, the defence of this great commercial port, fortified though it was, was a matter of anxiety and of urgent importance. The activities of the *Emden* were unpleasantly close. In the last week of September 1914 she ran up the western side of the island and, passing on to the north-west, in the neighbourhood of Minicoy Island with its lighthouse, scored several successes, including the capture of the Admiralty collier *Buresk* heavily laden with coal. The *Buresk*, as is told later, was still with her in her last venture at the Cocos Islands.<sup>1</sup> She then coaled in the Maldive Islands, a dependency of Ceylon, well suited for the hide-and-seek movements of a privateer, disappeared to Diego Garcia in the centre of the Indian Ocean and, returning to the Colombo area in the middle of October, secured a second Admiralty collier, the *Exford*, which also was in evidence in the final stage of her career.<sup>2</sup> At a later date another enemy vessel, the *Wolf*, strewed mines outside Colombo harbour, which sank two ships, and captured, a few days out from Ceylon, a Japanese vessel with a number of Ceylon passengers on board.

Ceylon then had good reason to be on her guard. Under

<sup>1</sup> See below, pp. 411, 413, 415.

<sup>2</sup> See below, p. 411.

the local Volunteer Ordinance of 1910 the Governor had power, in case of national emergency, to call out the Volunteers for active service, and on the outbreak of war some companies of the Ceylon Light Infantry were mobilized and kept ward over the bridges, while the Artillery and Engineer Volunteers were mobilized to help in the defence of Colombo. But a further step was soon taken under a 'Volunteer Amendment (Town Guard) Ordinance' which became law on the 15th of October 1914, about the time of the recrudescence of the *Emden's* depredations. This law 'in time of war or other emergency' empowered the Governor to authorize the formation of Town Guards for the protection of any town in the Colony and its vicinity, and when a Town Guard was formed, it was constituted a Volunteer Corps and came (unless otherwise determined by the Governor) under the provisions of the Volunteer Ordinance. The passing of this law was immediately followed by the formation of a Colombo Town Guard, which practically included every male European in Colombo, who was fit for service, and who was not already a member of an existing volunteer corps. At a later stage the younger men in the Town Guard were drafted into a new unit, the Town Guard Artillery, and later again the Town Guard Artillery was amalgamated with the Ceylon Artillery Volunteers under the title of the Ceylon Garrison Artillery. This corps, together with the Ceylon Engineers, was demobilized on the signing of the Armistice. Other volunteer defence units, which came into being in 1916, were a Motor-Cyclist Corps and a Volunteer Signalling Association, and a Ceylon Railway Battalion was organized in 1917.

But a more drastic step was taken in 1916. A special committee was appointed to consider the desirability of establishing a system of compulsory military training for British-born European male residents in the island and the lines upon which such a system should be framed. This was followed later in the year by the enactment of an ordinance, 'the Volunteer (Amendment) Ordinance', which became law on the 24th of December, and which provided for the compulsory enrolment of every male resident European British subject between the ages of 18 and 50, up to the age of 41 in a Volunteer Corps, and between the ages of 41 and 50 in a Town Guard or a Volunteer Reserve. Registration of all male Europeans under the

provisions and for the purposes of the ordinance was carried out early in 1917, and the compulsory clauses came into force in June of that year.

Volunteers of all units were requisitioned to support the police and the Regular troops on the occasion of riots, which broke out in the last days of May 1915, and which for some days were grave and widespread. They arose out of friction between Buddhist Sinhalese and Mohammedan Moormen. The quarrel was a domestic one of religious and racial origin, coupled with a certain amount of trade jealousy, and it seems to have had little or no connexion with the main issues of the war. The Sinhalese Provinces were for some time under martial law, but the incidents of the riot are not germane to the subject of this book inasmuch as the rising left no aftermath of disloyalty among any elements of the population. All that can be said of it here is that wherever local disturbances occurred in the British Empire during the war, the tension and excitement caused by the war undoubtedly contributed to them, otherwise the Ceylon riots present no features which link them with the war or in particular with enemy agency and intrigue.

In any case danger from this latter source was minimized by the removal of all German prisoners of war from the island. Ceylon had had comparatively recent experience of interned prisoners, for, at the time of the South African War, a large number of deported Boers had been encamped at Diyatalawa, up in the hills in the Province of Uva, so healthy a spot that, after the South Africans had been repatriated, it was retained as a military sanatorium and training ground. Here in 1914-15 enemy aliens and prisoners of war were again detained, among them the survivors of the *Emden*, naval prisoners having been at first detained in a prison camp at Ragama near Colombo ; but, by November 1915, they had all been shipped off to Australia. There was a Prize Court at Colombo, busy at the beginning of the war, seven enemy ships being captured or detained, and there was the same crop of ordinances in Ceylon as in other colonies, as to trading with the enemy, liquidation of enemy firms, custody and disposal of enemy property and so forth, together with an ordinance of 1917 directed against the activities of enemy missionaries and teachers.

It has been seen that the Colonial Government paid all the

cost of the Ceylon Planters' Rifle Corps Contingent and of the Sanitary Company which served in Mesopotamia, and that it also contributed a substantial sum to the expense of the passages of those who volunteered for active service. In addition it gave £2 millions directly to the Imperial Government in aid of war expenses. The first million was authorized by a war contribution ordinance passed in November 1915, under which £100,000 were to be given annually for 10 years, dating from the 1st of October, 1915, the contribution being specified as given by H.M.'s subjects in the island of Ceylon 'in testimony of their loyal and devoted allegiance to the King's Majesty and the British Empire'. Provision was made for the second million by an ordinance passed in June 1917, which authorized the Government to raise a loan up to Rs. 15 millions, and to place the proceeds at the disposal of the Home Government. The investors were to be paid 3 per cent. interest, and further sums were to be distributed in the form of prizes by drawing of bonds. The result, however, was disappointing. Industrial conditions, coupled with apathy on the part of the Ceylonese public, with some exceptions, militated against the success of the loan; it had to be abandoned, and in lieu the Legislative Council passed a financial resolution, pledging the colony to a contribution of the second million by such instalments in the next 10 years as should be found convenient. The Colonial Government also supplemented and supported private giving. Thus gifts of tea for the armies in the field were exempted from export duty; a sum of no less than Rs. 1 million was granted to the Disabled Ceylon Men's Fund; and to the funds raised privately for the entertainment of Australian and New Zealand troops, of invalided soldiers, of officers from Mesopotamia, of numbers of fighting men, whole or sick, on board the ships that called at Colombo, the island exchequer added at first 500 rupees a month and subsequently Rs. 1,000. Colombo, like Capetown and Durban, was a great scene of kindly hospitality to the passers-by in the years of war.

As the Government gave from public funds, so did the Government servants from their salaries. A Government Servants' One Day's Pay Fund was started in one of the provinces and, being taken up at head-quarters, was extended to the whole of the island. All the Government employes contributed to it one day's pay in the month, and the proceeds

were distributed to War Charities by a board, the chairman of which was at first the Colonial Secretary, Mr. R. E. Stubbs, as he then was, and subsequently Mr. B. Senior, C.M.G., I.S.O., while the Hon. Secretary was Mr. B. Gaspersz. Rs. 779,000 accrued to the charities from this source. In 1918 more than a thousand school teachers in the island gave one day's pay a month to War Charities.

In their One Day's Pay Fund the Government servants of Ceylon followed a lead given them by the planting community. The plan originated very early in the war, in September 1914, with up-country planters in the island, and Lieutenant-Commander C. Goolden, D.S.O., R.N., of Maskelya, acted as Hon. Secretary of the Fund until he left for active service in June 1915. Mr. L. A. Wright then took up the work and carried it on to the end of the war. The Fund was strongly supported not only by planters but also by other Europeans and in several cases by estate coolies, and the total amount subscribed from 1914 to May 1919 was nearly 787,000 rupees. The amounts of over 10,000 rupees which were subscribed from this fund to various war charities were as follows :

	Rs.
Disabled Ceylon Men's Fund . . . . .	230,359
Tea Gift . . . . .	85,647
St. John Ambulance and British Red Cross . . . . .	80,225
Blinded Soldiers and Sailors . . . . .	53,760
Belgian Relief . . . . .	52,095
Officers' Families . . . . .	37,050
Prince of Wales' National Relief . . . . .	29,265
<i>Times of Ceylon</i> War Passage Fund . . . . .	20,717
Lady Peirse's Naval Fund . . . . .	19,160
Mine Sweepers . . . . .	18,120
Bureau de Secours-British Section-Berne . . . . .	18,115
Blue Cross . . . . .	15,795
Ceylon Soldiers' General Purposes Fund . . . . .	12,043
Ceylon Contingent . . . . .	11,937

A One Day's Pay Fund was initiated in Colombo by the Chamber of Commerce, from which Rs. 93,000 were distributed to various charities, and the Secretary of the Chamber, Mr. A. Duncan, collected over £1,700 for an Aged Merchant Seamen and Widows Fund.

The Disabled Ceylon Men's Fund, which heads the above list, requires special notice. It was established for the benefit of fighting men from Ceylon of whom the war had taken toll and of their dependants, and it was organized by a Standing



Committee in Ceylon, the Chairman and Chief Organizer being the Chairman of the Planters' Association in the island, Mr. J. B. Coles, while the Hon. Secretaries were in succession the Rev. A. G. Fraser, the Rev. L. Macpherson, Mr. H. T. Brooks, and Mr. John Still. The Standing Committee was legally incorporated by a special ordinance passed in 1916, and the Government subscribed to it at first and promised by yearly instalments to make up a sum equal to the private subscriptions within a maximum of 1,000,000 rupees. The maximum was reached, for the total amount of private subscriptions was 1,176,000 rupees, and therefore the Fund had Rs. 2,176,000 at its disposal. Of the private subscriptions nearly 250,000 rupees were subscribed in London, London companies and proprietors contributing liberally by gifts and by annual acreage assessments. In 1915 the co-operation of the Ceylon Association in London was invited by the Standing Committee; for some time, until pressure of business obliged him to resign, Sir Everard im Thurn, formerly Lieutenant-Governor of Ceylon, took great interest in the work; a most untiring Chairman of the London Committee was found in Mr. A. J. Denison; and the Secretary of the London Association, Mr. A. O. Whiting, to whom the Standing Committee voted a piece of plate, with his efficient staff, carried out the voluminous duties of inquiry and relief without remuneration. The number of cases which called for assistance in London was 315. A special grant of £1,000 was made by the Ceylon Government to cover the cost of maintaining, clothing, and repatriating non-combatant prisoners of war who did not come within the scope of the ordinance, and unwounded Ceylonese soldiers on leave from the front were helped to the amount of over £700 from a small kindred fund, the Ceylon Soldiers' General Purposes Fund. The balance of the Disabled Ceylon Men's Fund has been, or is being, applied to pensions, annuities to widows and dependants, and to educational endowments for children.

The Ceylon planters were as liberal in giving as they were forward in personal service; they gave in kind as well as in money, especially in the form of tea. There had been for years past an export duty on tea levied under ordinances passed at the wish of the planting community and in the interest of that community, the proceeds of the duty being applied to

the advertisement of Ceylon teas in other countries. When the war came the planters again called on the Legislature to enable them to divert some of the money thus raised to war charities, and a tea cess ordinance of 1914 appropriated 30,000 rupees to the Prince of Wales' Fund and another 30,000 rupees to tea for the Russian Army, while a similar ordinance in 1915 gave 15,000 rupees to a Ceylon tea gift scheme. This scheme was initiated by the Ceylon planters early in the war. On the 4th of September 1914 the Planters' Association invited offers of tea or of funds to purchase tea for a free gift to the Army and Navy. Owing to restriction of freight and the urgent calls for other charities the fund rather fell into the background, but some 410,000 lbs. of tea were shipped from Ceylon.

Reference has been made to the funds raised for the benefit of fighting men, especially wounded men, on board the ships which called at Colombo, officers on leave from India, Mesopotamia, and Palestine, and Australian and New Zealand troops. The arrangements were mainly organized by Major O. Tonks, O.B.E., extra A.D.C. to the Governor, and the workers were for the most part members of the Ladies' Entertainment Committee. This Committee collected some Rs. 40,000 for entertainment purposes, and its representatives met every transport to provide comforts and entertainments for the wounded and their nurses. For the same purpose a small fund was raised at Kandy, and many planters gave hospitality to wounded officers in their bungalows up country. These were efforts which were necessarily purely local in their scope, and under the heading of local funds are given, among others, a Colombo War Fund, which realized over £4,500, an Indian (Ceylon) War Fund, and a *Times of Ceylon* Fund for aeroplanes which provided four aeroplanes at a cost of over 123,000 rupees. Planes were also given by individual citizens of Ceylon. The late Mr. F. J. de Saram, head of a leading firm of solicitors in Colombo, gave £2,500 for an aeroplane, and Mr. H. L. de Mel, C.B.E., £2,250 for a seaplane. Motor ambulances were forthcoming from various quarters. Mrs. Gibson was Hon. Secretary of the Ladies of Ceylon Motor Ambulance Fund, and as the ladies contributed so did the Chamber of Commerce. Among individual donors Mr. N. D. A. Silva Wijayasinghe, a Sinhalese, gave two, contributing Rs. 20,000 to this and other war purposes, and

another giver was a member of the Tamil community, Mr. C. Namasivayam.

Among the general funds, nearly Rs. 600,000 were contributed to the Prince of Wales' Fund, in addition to the Planters' tea cess. At the suggestion of the Governor the individual subscriptions to this Fund were limited to Rs. 1,000. The Hon. Secretary of the Prince of Wales' Fund, as well as of the British and French Red Cross Funds, was Mr. H. M. Hillyer. The British Red Cross was a beneficiary to the amount of Rs. 452,000, in addition to £2,000 subscribed by Ceylon Moslems to a small St. John Ambulance War Fund and some special contributions such as the Red Cross Necklace composed of Ceylon gems given by various donors. In response to the Lord Mayor of London's appeal for the Red Cross in 1918, the Ceylon Association in London combined with the Rubber Growers' Association, the Indian Tea Association, and the South Indian Association to collect between £10,000 and £11,000. French, Russian, Serbian, and Montenegrin Red Cross Funds were not forgotten, the French Red Cross receiving over Rs. 41,000. Belgian Relief was a cause which was well supported; a fund for this purpose was raised very early in the war by a committee of Sinhalese ladies, presided over by Mrs. Henry de Mel, and was liberally subscribed to by Europeans, the primary object being relief to wounded Belgian soldiers and to widows of the killed. Nearly £7,000 were subscribed to a 'Limbless' Fund, and Rs. 292,000 to a Sandbag Fund. In England the Star and Garter Home at Richmond specially attracted Ceylon generosity. Towards the end of 1915 an appeal to Ceylon ladies resident in England, issued by Lady Bois, wife of the then Chairman of the Ceylon Association in London, assisted by Mrs. Whiting, wife of the Secretary, produced a sum of £2,299, which was sufficient to equip and endow a Ceylon room in the Home. A similar amount for the like purpose was given by a Sinhalese gentleman, Mr. E. C. de Fonseka, M.B.E., and Mrs. de Fonseka, and another cot was endowed by a leading Tamil, Mr. Sagarasingam. The latter was also one of various Ceylon subscribers to a Y.M.C.A. hut at Paddington. This war charity was initiated by residents in Paddington, but it received subscriptions from Ceylon and the hut was largely used by native Ceylon soldiers during the war. In Ceylon, as in London, the Y.M.C.A. was strongly supported by Ceylonese,

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no less than by Europeans, the President of the Ceylon Branch being Mr. H. L. de Mel.

It cannot be said that the Ceylonese community taken as a whole compared favourably with the European in giving to war purposes, but still with the War Charities of Ceylon the best-known names in Ceylonese circles were associated, de Soysas, de Sarams, de Mels, and others, and they gave in various ways. Thus Sir Solomon Bandaranaike, C.M.G., gave his salary and allowances as Maha Mudalyar for nearly three years to war funds, the Disabled Ceylon Men's Fund reaping the benefit, while Mr. J. M. de Mel gave 5 per cent. of the gross value of the output of his plumbago mines for five years. The *Times of Ceylon* was very active in collecting money for various war funds and, in addition to subscriptions in England, raised in Ceylon over Rs. 500,000. The principal beneficiaries from this source were the Blinded Soldiers' Fund, the Ceylon Aeroplane Fund, the *Times of Ceylon* War Passage Fund, Queen Mary's Fund, and the Prince of Wales' Fund.

The ladies had a hand—a leading hand—in nearly all the funds. The Ladies' Entertainment Committee has already been mentioned, but there was hardly a war charity in Ceylon which did not owe success in very great measure to the ladies of the island. Conspicuous among them was Mrs. (now Lady) Stubbs, wife of the Colonial Secretary, who was President of the Entertainment Committee, Vice-President of the Needlework Guild, and active in promoting collections of diverse kinds for patriotic objects. The President of the Ceylon branch of Queen Mary's Needlework Guild, until she left Ceylon, was Lady Wood Renton, wife of the late Chief Justice, Sir Alexander Wood Renton, and Lady Bertram, wife of Sir Anton Bertram, who succeeded to the Chief Justiceship, organized the work of the Guild almost from first to last. Over 400,000 articles were made for and sent to the sick and wounded, principally in Mesopotamia and Palestine, and Rs. 159,000 were raised in cash. When the war-work of the Ceylon Branch was over, the balance of the fund, which was sent to H.M. the Queen, was no less than £6,000. The St. John Nursing Association was a fruitful field of women's work, and from Ceylon nurses went forth to India and to the Western Front. The first acting Lady Superintendent and Hon. Secretary of the Ceylon branch of the Association was

Mrs. F. H. Layard, whose war work added to the esteem in which the name of Layard is held in Ceylon, and she was succeeded in turn by Mrs. John Fox and Mrs. C. M. Gordon. Mrs. Gordon was also Hon. Secretary to the Entertainment Committee and very active in connexion with the Ceylon Ladies' League War Depot, first organized by Mrs. Sutherland Ross. The depot forwarded a large number of garments to Mesopotamia and raised a considerable sum for war charities. A Ceylon Bandages Club, by which again the troops in Mesopotamia benefited, was initiated by Mrs. Reginald John. A 'Museum Fête', a 'One Rupee Fair', a 'fête and concert at G.O.H.', a 'Cries of London Fair', with other similar devices for raising money, originated with the inventive brains of the Ceylon ladies and brought in Rs. 200,000 for war funds. Ladies formed circles at provincial and up-country centres, and the work done away from Colombo was no less effective and self-sacrificing than that which came more immediately under the public eye. The Ceylon ladies who were given honours for war work were Lady Stubbs and Lady Anton Bertram, recipients of the C.B.E., and Mrs. C. M. Gordon, Mrs. Huyshe Elliot, Mrs. A. J. R. de Soysa and Miss Twynam, to all of whom the M.B.E. was given; Mrs. de Soysa very worthily represented Sinhalese patriotism and philanthropy, and Miss Twynam bore a name which is a household word at Jaffna.<sup>1</sup>

When the war came, we are told that there was no sign of panic in Ceylon, and 'a remarkable lack of distress arising from unemployment'. There was every evidence of loyalty among all sections of the population, and the entry of Turkey into the war did not shake the attachment of the numerous Moslems in the island. The Moormen were not responsible for the riots of 1915. Throughout the war years there was no general and widespread distress. There were such features and incidents as mark one year and another in normal times, shortage of rain and therefore of paddy crops in some districts, superabundance of rains and floods in others. In the coco-nut-growing areas on the coastline there was more general and continuous depression than elsewhere; on the other hand, this industry tended to revive in the most straitened and difficult

<sup>1</sup> Much information as to the war effort of Ceylon and the principal war workers is given in *Ceylon and the War*, by Samson Abeyesooriya, Colombo, 1919.

last months of the war, when an influenza epidemic was added to other troubles. In Ceylon, as everywhere else, the war caused a rise year by year in the cost of imported articles, owing to growing shortage of supplies and of means of transport, and one serious difficulty, peculiar to Ceylon, was caused by its very close connexion with India. India is the channel of exchange for Ceylon, and Ceylon trade generally is financed through India. India, moreover, heads the list of countries importing into Ceylon; it sends to Ceylon great stores of rice and curry stuffs, Indian-grown rice, as opposed to Ceylon paddy, being in particular the staple food of the many thousands of Tamil Indian labourers on the tea plantations. When, therefore, from the end of 1916 onwards, financial complications as between India and Ceylon coincided with a restricted supply of Indian rice, much anxiety was caused to the island government, and in the years 1917 and 1918 every effort was made to increase the home supply of foodstuffs and extend the area of paddy cultivation.

Still, the war taken as a whole did not inflict much suffering upon the peasantry of Ceylon, and the staple industries of the island, with the exception of the coco-nut industry, in the main benefited by it. So it was all through the British Empire. Raw products were at a premium, and the countries which produced them reaped a rich harvest. This was the general rule, but the record of Ceylon in this respect was a more in-and-out record than was the case with most of the tropical possessions of Great Britain. At first there was the inevitable dislocation of trade. Germany headed the list of foreign customers of Ceylon before the war, though the whole foreign trade of the Colony was insignificant as compared with the trade within the Empire. The principal article of export to Germany was copra, and the loss caused by the closing of the German and Austrian markets was estimated at nearly 25 million rupees per annum. Initial restrictions were placed on the export of rubber, plumbago, and copra, and apart from such restrictions trade was hampered by a well-founded apprehension of the *Emden*. Thus the trade and revenue statistics of 1914 showed a small decrease on those of the previous year, but notwithstanding Ceylon prospered in 1914. It prospered too in 1915, in spite of the grave setback caused by the riots. There was no lack of food, and the rise in prices

was only moderate. A fall in revenue was fully met by drastic decrease in expenditure; there was a shortage in imports but a great increase in the value of exports, Japan taking the place of Germany among foreign markets, and American ships multiplying. It was a good season for tea, with high prices and increased volume of export, especially to Russia and Egypt: there was a larger output of rubber than before and a record export, also with higher prices. The figures for the products of the coco-nut palm were not so favourable, but together with tea, rubber, and cocoa, coco-nuts, copra, and coco-nut oil were made subject to export duties from the 1st of October in this year. An export duty was also levied on plumbago from the 2nd of August 1916, or rather an increase was made in the existing export duty which for many years past had been levied by way of royalty to the Government. This industry, which had suffered from the restriction on its export at the beginning of the war, improved when that restriction was removed, and it was phenomenally successful in 1916, three-quarters of the export being taken by the United States. 1916 was a great year for rubber also and a good year for tea, though not so good as 1915. Only the coco-nut industry did not share in the war-fed prosperity. For the native population it was on the whole a kindly year, though for the second season in succession there was a partial failure in the north-east monsoon which provides rains for two-thirds of the island, the paddy crops were in consequence short, and there was now a more marked increase in the prices of imported foodstuffs. The revenue showed a very large increase, and there was an increase in value of imports as well as of exports. It was the best of the war years for Ceylon, and as it went out conditions became more difficult. Towards the end of the year the Government of India restricted the sale of Indian Council drafts by which the trade of Ceylon was mainly financed, and, as already stated, serious difficulties followed in 1917, the situation being partially met by the issue of new currency notes to the banks in Ceylon, which were legalized by a paper currency ordinance of 1917. The instability of the exchange between India and Ceylon led also to special arrangements between the two governments in order to enable Ceylon to pay for the foodstuffs imported from India. The year 1917 was in short a far more difficult year than its predecessor: the

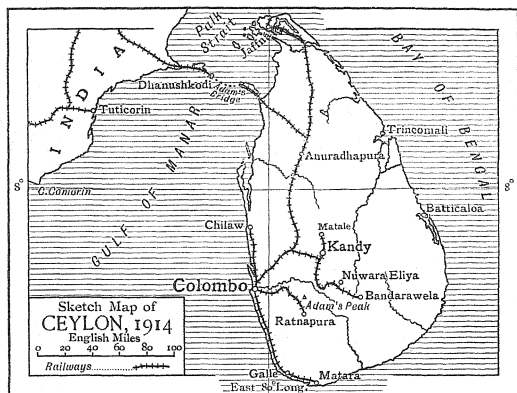
war was making itself felt, there was a more general rise of prices, more shortage of freight, more signs of unemployment. Yet judged by revenue and trade returns the colony was still prospering, though not to the same extent as in 1916. The value of the exports, however, exceeded that of 1916. Tea fared well on the whole, rubber very well, the coco-nut industry not well, and in the latter part of the year there was a great fall in plumbago. The collapse of Russia, a great tea-drinking country, and the entry of the United States into the war were both unfavourable to Ceylon. Yet the exports to the United States were double in value of what they had been previously, and one marked feature of the year, as far as Ceylon trade was concerned, was that for the first time in the history of the island the total exports to foreign countries exceeded in value the exports to the United Kingdom. For the first time, too, rubber displaced tea at the head of the exports.

The year 1918 showed a decrease alike in revenue and in trade, the value of the exports being less by one-third than that of 1917. Of the staple exports tea suffered least; the volume of export was not so large as in the previous years, but prices were good and assured in consequence of the export being placed under the control of the Food Controller in the United Kingdom and a Tea Commissioner in Ceylon. Tea easily regained its place as the premier export of Ceylon, the year being a bad year for rubber in consequence of restriction on the import into the United States. The export of rubber was only two-thirds of the export in 1917 and the value was less than half, but the industry was to some extent relieved by a reduction in the export duty. It was a bad year for plumbago—prices were low, and the amount exported was less than half the export of 1916. The languishing coco-nut industry was helped by a remission of the export duty on copra and coco-nut oil at the end of 1917 and throughout 1918. In the latter part of 1918 its prospects greatly improved; there was an increased demand for copra in India, and coco-nut oil was bought up at remunerative prices for the Ministry of Munitions in England.

The war did not produce any new industrial developments in Ceylon, the nearest approach to it being a demand for mica in 1918 by the Ministry of Munitions which led to shipments from Ceylon under Government guarantee. The



Armistice came in time to forestall any general or acute distress, and the end of 1918 found the colony with leeway to make up in needed Public Works, with increased taxes, including higher postal rates, but otherwise not seriously harmed by the war, and more self-dependent in various ways, including defence, than had been the case before the fateful 4th of August 1914.



The war has been commemorated in Ceylon by a Victory Column, designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, R.A., and the cost of its erection has absorbed more than Rs. 150,000 out of a total Ceylon War Memorial Fund of over Rs. 335,000. Out of the balance of the Fund, Rs. 50,000 have been given towards the cost of a Sailors' Ward in the General Hospital of Colombo, to which object the Government has contributed £7,500 received from the British Red Cross Society, and what remained has been devoted towards the building of a Convalescent Home on the sea-coast.

## THE MALDIVE ISLANDS

Ceylon has a dependency of its own, lying about 400 miles away to the west and south-west. This dependency is the Maldive Islands, a long string of coco-nut bearing coral atolls, running south and north, and inhabited by a scanty Moham-medan population. The Maldives have always peacefully followed the fortunes of Ceylon and recognized the suzerainty of the European rulers of Ceylon. Year by year an embassy comes to Colombo from Malé, the principal island and the residence of the Sultan, with nominal tribute in the form of small gifts, and the kindly relations existing between the Ceylon Government and the Maldivians are never disturbed. The Sultan sent £2,000 to the Prince of Wales' Fund, a large sum for a ruler of very small means, and his Ministers and officials gave an additional £333 6s. 8d.

PART VI  
MALAYA

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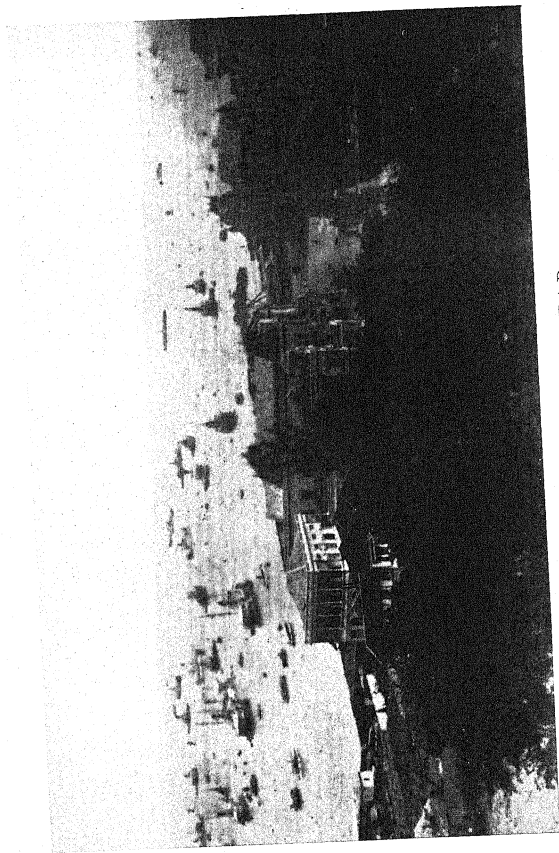
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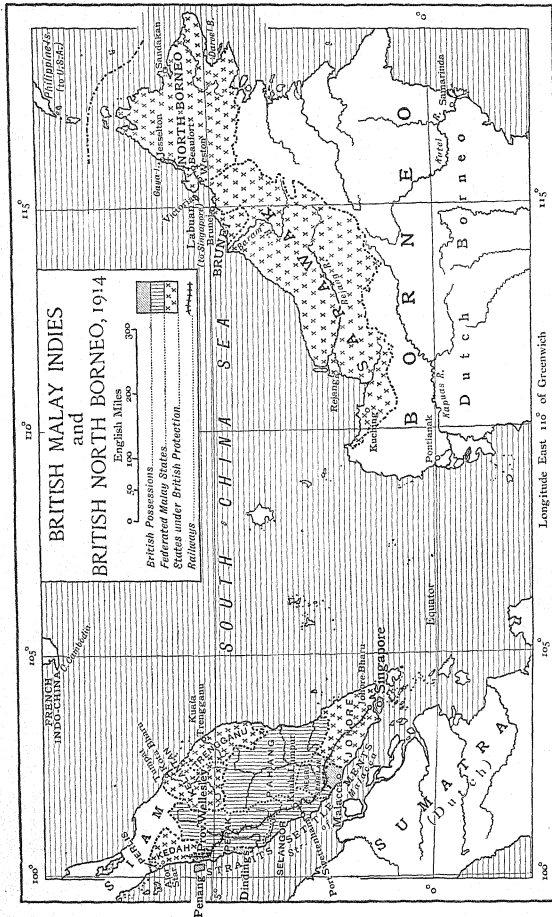


SINGAPORE ROADSTEAD

## SECTION I

### BRITISH MALAYA

THE Straits Settlements, the British possessions on the Straits of Malacca, when, in 1867, they were separated from India and constituted a separate Crown Colony, were three in number. The northernmost, and as a British possession the eldest in point of time, is the island of Penang, with the mainland strip opposite the island, known as Province Wellesley. Farther south is the territory of Malacca acquired by treaty from the Dutch, who in earlier times had conquered it from the Portuguese. At the end of the Peninsula is the island of Singapore, which Great Britain owes to the foresight of Sir Stamford Raffles and whose centenary as a British possession fell in 1919. In 1874 the Dindings, south of Penang, and north of Malacca, including a mainland strip and the island of Pangkor, which island had already been ceded to Great Britain under an old treaty with Perak, were annexed to the Colony and attached to Penang, and in the present century further additions have been made to the Colony. These are the phosphate-bearing Christmas Island and the Cocos Islands, far out in the Indian Ocean, which, in 1900 and 1903 respectively, were annexed to the Straits Settlements and incorporated in the settlement of Singapore, and the island of Labuan off Brunei Bay on the north-west coast of Borneo. Labuan, which has a fine harbour and resources of coal, was ceded to Great Britain by the Sultan of Brunei as far back as 1846, through the good offices of the first Rajah Brooke, and was long administered as a separate colony. At the beginning of 1907 it was annexed to the Straits Settlements and was at first incorporated with Singapore, but subsequently constituted a separate settlement. Outside the Colony, but in closest touch with it, the whole of the southern part of the Malay Peninsula is under British Protectorate. There are the Federated Malay States, comprising the four States of Perak, Selangor, the Negri Sembilan, or Nine States, itself an old federation, and Pahang. Immediately over against the island of Singapore is Johore, and the





Treaty of Bangkok in 1909 transferred from Siamese suzerainty to British control the States of Trengganu, Kelantan, Kedah, and Perlis. The Governor of the Straits Settlements is High Commissioner for these Malay Protectorates. He is also High Commissioner for the Protected State of Brunei in Borneo, the last remnant of a once powerful Sultanate, which was brought under direct British supervision in 1905; and, as British Agent for North Borneo and Sarawak, he is the channel of relations between the Imperial Government and those two Protected States.

The head-quarters of administration are at Singapore, which has in fact become the centre of a British Malay Empire, and which, through the immense influx of Chinese immigrants, is now much more a Chinese than a Malay city, analogous to Hong Kong in volume of trade and in the cosmopolitan elements in its population. The Colony is of the normal type, with Governor, Executive and Legislative Councils. There is no elective element in the Legislative Council and there is an official majority in its composition. Two of the unofficial members are nominated by the Chambers of Commerce of Singapore and Penang respectively. The area of the Colony, excluding the Cocos Islands, Christmas Island, and Labuan, is rather over 1,500 square miles, and in 1914 it had a population of about three-quarters of a million, the Chinese being the most numerous element and the Europeans numbering about 8,000. Prior to the war, with the exception of a duty on liquor and on petroleum, the ports were entirely free, but in the course of the war the freedom was further restricted by the imposition of import duties on some few articles such as tobacco. The Protectorates on the mainland of the Peninsula cover an area of over 50,000 square miles, with a population on a rough estimate of round about two millions. There are British residents or advisers to the Sultans in the different States, and other British officers in varying proportions. There is a Federal Council for the Federated Malay States, and all the Protectorates are under the High Commissioner, assisted by a Chief Secretary for the Federated Malay States. Those States, as has been told in the first volume, had before the war given evidence alike of their prosperity and of their goodwill to the British Empire by the gift of the battleship *Malaya*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See vol. i, p. 220.

Throughout the war the Governor and High Commissioner was Sir Arthur Young (now G.C.M.G., K.B.E.), who, after long service in Cyprus, became Colonial Secretary of the Straits Settlements in 1906 and Governor in 1911. When the war came he was on leave in England, but returned to Singapore on the 6th of September 1914. In the interval the Government had been administered by the Colonial Secretary, Mr. R. J. Wilkinson, C.M.G., subsequently Governor of Sierra Leone.

Singapore is a fortified Imperial station, with a Regular garrison including Royal Garrison Artillery, Royal Engineers, and infantry. Before the war there were normally two infantry battalions, one European, one Indian. For the cost of the garrison the Colony paid annually up to a maximum of 20 per cent. of its revenue, with the proviso that in no year should the sum paid exceed the actual cost of the garrison. The General Officer commanding the troops is always a member of the Executive and Legislative Councils of the Colony. From 1915 to 1919 the post was held by Brigadier-General Ridout, R.E., now Major-General Sir Dudley Ridout, K.B.E., C.B., C.M.G.

The police force of the colony, with a strength of over 2,700, is not a military body, and when the war began the forces of Malaya, other than the Imperial garrison, consisted of the Malay States Guides, the Johore Military Forces, and various bodies of volunteers.<sup>1</sup>

The Malay States Guides, of whose origin and previous record some account has been given in the first volume,<sup>2</sup> were a battalion of Indians enlisted both locally and in India, the officers being Regular officers of the British and Indian Armies. The upkeep was provided for by the Government of the Federated Malay States. They were responsible nominally for the internal defence of the Federated Malay States, but by treaty in time of emergency could be used for the defence of Singapore. Their establishment was: Three double-companies of infantry and one mountain battery of artillery,

<sup>1</sup> For these forces see also vol. i, pp. 257 and 264-5. A great amount of material was collected and compiled, and much of the following account was written by Sir W. George Maxwell, K.B.E., C.M.G., and forwarded by the Governor of the Straits Settlements. Additional material was supplied by the late General Officer Commanding at Singapore, Major-General Sir Dudley Ridout, K.B.E., C.B., C.M.G., and from various other sources.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. i, pp. 255-6.



SIR ARTHUR YOUNG

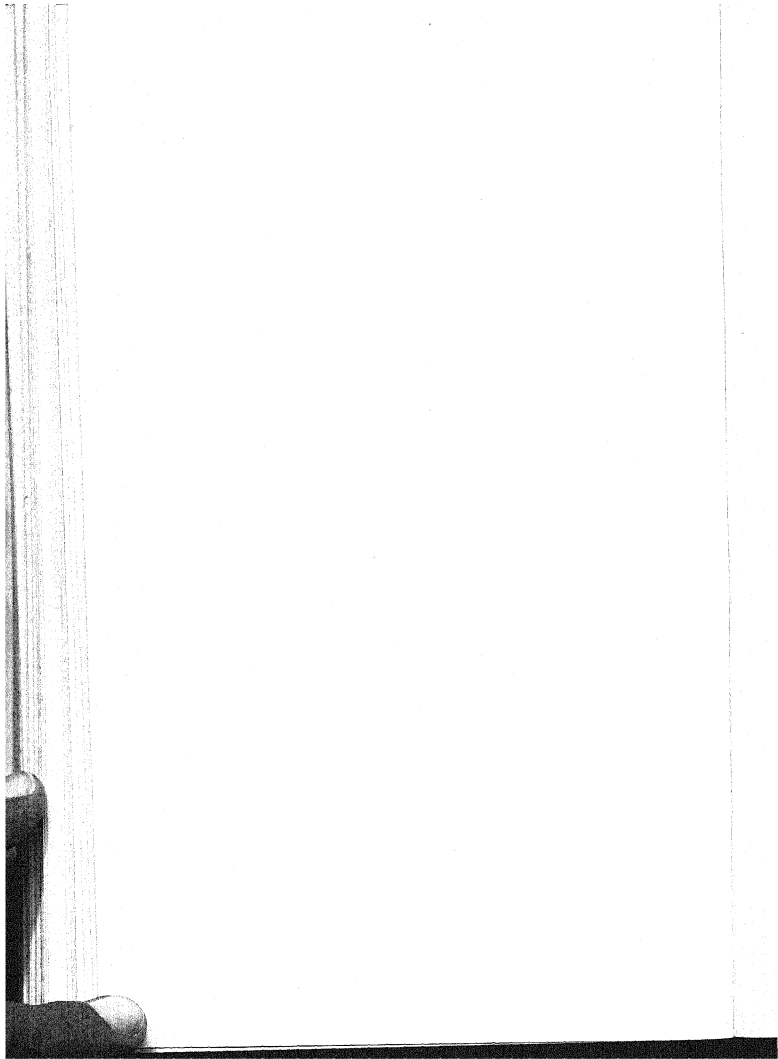
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with a total strength of 15 officers and 895 other ranks. The Johore Military Forces, first constituted in 1879 by the late Sultan of Johore, consisted of an infantry corps supplemented by an artillery company. At the beginning of the war the strength was 500 infantry and 100 artillery. In addition to this regular force, Johore had a Malay Volunteer Force of about 400 officers and men. The other volunteer forces in Malaya consisted of the Singapore Volunteer Corps, the Penang Volunteers, and the Malay States Volunteer Rifles, the conditions of service in these three corps, prior to the war, being voluntary enrolment for two years. The Singapore Volunteer Corps at the end of 1913 had a strength of 39 officers and 607 men. It comprised, in addition to Asiatic infantry, a body of men trained in coast-defence gunnery called the Singapore Volunteer Artillery, a further body forming an engineer unit, termed the Singapore Royal Engineers (Volunteer), also a field ambulance unit termed the Singapore Volunteer Ambulance, and a Maxim Gun Company with 4 maxim guns. The infantry were Chinese and Malays. The Penang Volunteers at the end of 1913 had a strength of 11 officers and 268 other ranks; all infantry, including European, Malay, and Chinese companies. The strength of the Malay States Volunteer Rifles at the end of 1913 was 23 officers and 586 other ranks, all Europeans. The unit was divided into five companies of infantry, spread over the whole of the Federated Malay States. It was in possession of two machine guns.

On the outbreak of war recruiting for the existing Volunteer Corps received a great impetus. In October 1914 the Singapore Volunteer Corps raised an additional European company named the Singapore Volunteer Rifles, and in November of the same year a Veterans Company (for Europeans over 40 years of age) was enrolled. A similar company was formed in Penang in the following year. Various further offers of voluntary service were received, with the result that the following units were formed in due course: The Malacca Volunteer Rifles were raised in August 1915, and practically every European in Malacca, fit or otherwise, offered himself for service in this corps. The Province Wellesley Volunteer Rifles were formally constituted in November 1915, and in this corps again every able-bodied European in Province Wellesley offered himself for service. The Malayan Volunteer

Infantry were State troops under their own officers in each of the four Federated States, the rank and file consisting of Malays (mostly), Chinese, Eurasians, and Tamils. The formation of new platoons in each State proceeded throughout the war, the movement being eminently popular alike with the rulers of the States and with their subjects. The Johore Volunteer Rifles were a volunteer corps for Europeans resident in Johore, and the Kelantan Volunteer Rifles were similar to the Johore Volunteer Rifles.

Between the end of 1913 and the end of 1916 the Local Forces practically trebled their strength. On the last day of 1913 the numbers stood at 73 officers and 1,461 other ranks, on the last day of 1914 at 78 and 1,925, on the last day of 1916 at 158 and 4,275, and on the last day of 1918 at 188 and 4,020. These totals include reserves under the Reserve Force and Civil Guard Ordinance of 1915, which is mentioned below, but they do not include two small corps raised in Kedah, solely through the enterprise of local residents, and disbanded at the end of the war, nor do they include a further unit named the Coast Defence Volunteers, which was raised in 1917 in Singapore and Penang under the Coast Defence Volunteers Ordinance and which served afloat with a strength of 9 officers and 200 other ranks. It must be borne in mind that large numbers of men were constantly leaving Malaya for service at the front, *pro tanto* depleting the ranks of the Local Forces.

In 1915 it was considered necessary to legislate for the inclusion in the Volunteer Local Forces of every fit male of military age, being a British subject of pure European descent, who was not already a volunteer or member of His Majesty's Forces, and for this purpose a Reserve Force and Civil Guard Ordinance was passed in the Straits Settlements on the 12th of August 1915, a similar enactment being passed in the Federated Malay States on 18th November 1915. These Ordinances gave power for the establishment in any area of Reserve Forces or Civil Guards and provided for the registration of every male British subject of pure European descent between the ages of 18 and 55. The Reserve Force was to consist of men under 40 and the Civil Guard of men from 40 to 55. Under these laws Reserve Forces and Civil Guards were established in Singapore and the Federated Malay States. The formation of a Reserve Force and a Civil Guard was formally authorized

at Penang, but no occasion arose for the enforcement of the Ordinance in that settlement. All fit males of military age, and many beyond that age, were enrolled in the Penang Volunteers, and the whole corps took their training very seriously and attained a satisfactory standard. It is a matter of great credit to Malacca and Province Wellesley that, in spite of the difficulties which volunteers had to face in covering the distances, in many cases very considerable, from their houses to their parades, it was never found necessary to exercise compulsory powers in these two provinces. Further legislation was embodied in the Military Service Ordinance of 1918, which provided that every European of military age and fitness, who was not indispensable, should be enrolled compulsorily in a force to be known as the Overseas Force of the Straits Settlements. The Armistice was signed, however, as the first batch of recruits under this Ordinance was about to sail.

The Local Forces in Malaya were administered and trained by the General Officer Commanding the Troops in the Straits Settlements, acting under instructions from the Governor, the medium of communication being the Staff Officer to the Local Forces. Training was very considerably extended on the outbreak of war, and a system of compulsory parades was introduced. It was found necessary to lay down in 1917 that 6 compulsory drills and 12 ordinary drills per quarter were to be attended by Town Corps, and 6 compulsory and 6 ordinary by Rural Corps. In some cases the distances which were covered by members of Volunteer Rural Corps were very great, more than 40 miles to drill and back. In addition to these drills, camps were instituted for the Federated Malay States, for a time with much success. Owing to the requirements of the Regular army in war areas it was found impossible to arm the largely increased Local Forces in a satisfactory manner. Recourse was made to India, whence a large number of emergency arms were obtained, sufficiently good for the class of work to which the volunteers could be put, but disheartening to keen rifle shots who looked for greater accuracy. In 1915 the bulk of the British European volunteers had had no military experience whatever. Their training, therefore, was of the nature of recruit training, followed by field work, as soon as any unit was considered fit for it. But the grounding

received was so good that men who were sent home or to India were readily accepted as candidates for Officer Cadet Units or the Indian Army Reserve of Officers, and the reputation of the men from Malaya stood very high. Great credit is due to officers, non-commissioned officers, and instructors from among the volunteers themselves for the way in which the training was carried out, for, owing to the exigencies of the war, trained regular instructors could not be obtained, and that such a satisfactory standard was attained is an indication of the keenness with which the bulk of the men took their training. It entailed considerable sacrifice and physical strain; for the training was usually carried out after long and tiring days at businesses which were run at high pressure owing to reduction of staff. The testimony of Sir Dudley Ridout is that 'all units throughout Malaya were determined to fit themselves for war so far as the circumstances of the moment permitted. It will always redound to their credit that it was from the rank and file themselves that the demand for increased training came'. So well trained were the members of the Volunteer Forces in Malaya that those who went to the United Kingdom were accepted by the War Office, on the recommendation of the General Officer Commanding, as officer cadets in the officer cadet units without the preliminary training in the ranks of regular units, which was insisted upon in other cases, and in one instance a Malay States Volunteer was, on the General's recommendation, accepted as a captain without passing through the lower grades.

Apart from special services on the occasion of the mutiny at Singapore and the rising in Kelantan, accounts of which are given below, the Local Forces of British Malaya throughout the war took a most active part in the defence of the Colony. At Singapore they supplemented and partially replaced the Regular garrison, supplied guards for docks, reservoirs, and cable stations, manned examination batteries and worked electric lights. The Singapore Volunteer Corps had a definite place to fill in the defence scheme of the city and port, and filled it well, the efficiency of the Volunteer Artillery making it possible to spare a large proportion of the Royal Garrison Artillery for active service in the war areas. When the demand for trained artillerymen at the front was at its height, the Volunteer Artillery was mobilized for short periods for



'specialist' training, and several members of the corps joined the Royal Artillery. The Maxim Gun Company was mobilized at the outset of the war to guard the prisoners of war. The services of the Engineer unit enabled the number of Royal Engineers at Singapore to be reduced to a minimum, the Engine Room Section, notably the men employed by the Straits Trading Company and the United Engineers Ltd., giving a fine illustration of sense of public duty alike by the men themselves and by their employers. Equally valuable, in their respective lines, was the work of the Singapore Field Ambulance and of the Coast Defence Volunteers. At Penang the Volunteers guarded the cable station, and the Coast Defence Volunteers manned anti-submarine patrols. Over and above the Volunteer Forces of the Colony itself there were early in the war in training at Singapore over 100 of the Malay States Volunteer Rifles; during the war Malay States Guides shared in the defence of Singapore, and from the beginning of 1915 onwards the Johore Forces co-operated admirably in the island, releasing a number of Europeans for service at the front.

The services of the local forces were in much demand on the occasion of a serious mutiny which broke out at Singapore on the 15th of February 1915. The infantry battalion of the Regular garrison at this date was a battalion of the Indian Army, and the mutineers were among the native non-commissioned officers and rank and file of this battalion. With the exception of a few bluejackets, Royal Artillery, and Engineers, there were no other Regular forces in the Colony at the time, and the work of suppression and subsequent arrest largely devolved upon the detachment of Malay States Volunteer Rifles already mentioned, upon the Singapore Volunteer Corps and upon armed civilians. At the Alexandra barracks, where the Indian battalion was quartered and where the mutiny originated, the Mountain Battery of the Malay States Guides were also quartered at the time. Some of the men were supposed to have joined the mutineers, but the main body retreated to Johore en route for the head-quarters of the regiment at Taiping in Perak, and subsequent prolonged investigation exonerated the battery from any participation in the mutiny.

It was the time of the Chinese New Year, the Chinese population of Singapore were keeping a three-days' holiday and

paid little attention to what was taking place. The Indian battalion was on the point of leaving for Hong Kong and had been finally inspected by the General Officer in Command on the morning of the 15th. About three o'clock in the afternoon, as the small arms ammunition was being loaded on motor lorries, a shot was fired, and a wing of the battalion mutinied and seized the ammunition. The British officers were powerless to stay the rising, and warnings were sent out in all directions. A detachment of 100 mutineers made for the camp where the prisoners of war were interned, killed thirteen officers and men of the guard, including the commandant, wounded three others, fraternized with the prisoners and opened the door for escape. But there was no sign of premeditated collusion, one prisoner was killed and another wounded in the course of the shooting, and at the moment no attempt was made to escape. Elsewhere in the city, in the course of the afternoon, some twenty Europeans were murdered, including a lady, others, Europeans and natives, were wounded, the jail was attempted and the Central Police Station, but the outrages were spasmodic and there was absence of concerted plan. As soon as warning was received, a small naval force was landed from H.M.S. *Cadmus* then in the harbour and, marching up the road towards the barracks, drove back a party of mutineers who were making their way to the docks. At the same time a detachment of the Malay States Volunteer Rifles, who, as already stated, were training at Singapore and were stationed within easy reach of the barracks, succeeded under fire in garrisoning the house where the Colonel was isolated. But it was not before sunset that the whole scattered European community was fully aware of the crisis, martial law was proclaimed at 6.30, the women were gathered into safe refuges, the men concentrated for defence work at the Drill Hall and the Central Police Station, and in the evening a special train brought in 150 men of the Johore Military Forces, under the personal command of the Sultan.

The whole battalion had not mutinied, for a body of 80 men from its ranks offered to join in the defence of the Colonel's house. They were told to surrender at a police station, which they did, and on the first night 138 of the mutineers gave themselves up at another station; the movement was already breaking down. On the next morning, the 16th, a small mixed

force of bluejackets, artillery, volunteers, and armed civilians fought their way to the barracks and brought off the occupants of the Colonel's house, and throughout the day guards and patrols were organized and strengthened. The 17th and 18th brought landing parties from French, Japanese, and Russian cruisers, on the 18th the barracks were finally reoccupied, and all that was left was to round up the mutineers who were still at large, many of them being accounted for in Johore. At the end of a week 614 out of 800 had surrendered, and before this date six companies of the 4th (Territorial) battalion of the Shropshire Light Infantry had come in from Rangoon to replace the Indian troops, the loyal members of whom subsequently did good service in the Cameroons,<sup>1</sup> East Africa, and on the North-West Frontier of India.

A little later, beginning at the end of April 1915, there was a rising in the Pasir Puteh district of the Protected State of Kelantan, a coast district bordering on Trengganu. It was dealt with by a mixed force of Regulars, Royal Artillery, Engineers, and Shropshire Light Infantry, and of Volunteers; and, after the contingent of Regulars had been withdrawn, order was maintained by Local Forces alone, drawn from the Malay States Guides and the Malay sections of the Penang Volunteers and the Singapore Volunteer Corps, all Asiatics. It is worthy of record, as illustrating the efficiency of the Administrative Departments, that in this instance the order for an Expeditionary Force having been issued by the G.O.C. at 11 a.m., by 5 p.m. 400 men had been prepared, fully equipped for service in the field, and rationed for one month.

Shortly after the trouble in Kelantan had ended, in September 1915, the Malay States Guides, a company of which had volunteered for and been employed in Kelantan, were sent farther afield, and, with the exception of a small detachment left at Taiping, served with the Aden Field Force till November 1919.<sup>2</sup> During their overseas service the Government of the Federated Malay States continued to pay their ordinary cost. They suffered a few casualties, among them being the Second-in-Command, Major Borton, who was killed in 1917; they were credited with various honours for service in the field; and they earned high commendation from the General Officer

<sup>1</sup> See p. 327 above and vol. iv, pp. 100 note and 103.

<sup>2</sup> See above, pp. 141 and 144.

Commanding the Aden Field Force. At the end of 1916 there was a call for volunteers for a small Expeditionary Force to be sent to the Nicobar Islands in connexion with a plot, which had been unearthed, on the part of the Germans and their sympathizers, to throw arms into and cause a rising in India. European volunteers only were asked for, and more than could be employed were forthcoming from the ranks of the Singapore Volunteer Rifles, the Malay States Volunteer Rifles, and other services. Eventually, however, the expedition was not found necessary.

In taking stock of the number of British residents in the Straits Settlements and the Malay Peninsula who crossed the seas to join the Army on one front or another, it must be borne in mind that here, as everywhere else in the British Empire, many more would have gone had they been free to follow their own inclination. Thus the Singapore Volunteer Artillery and the Singapore Royal Engineer Volunteers had, as has been seen, taken their place at the outbreak of war in the defence of the port. It was found necessary to prevent Europeans of these corps from joining up at home because they were required at Singapore. By retaining their services it was found possible to maintain both the business and the military side of life in Singapore, but it was at the expense of disappointment to the individuals. Similarly, in the Federated Malay States, it was essential from a military point of view to keep some reserve of Europeans. At the end of 1916, however, it was found possible to review the military requirements of the Malay Peninsula, and proposals were made by the G.O.C. to the Governments of the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States for the release of a certain number of Europeans of military age. The result was that from the 1st of January 1917 those Governments agreed to pay the passages home of such men as were of military age, physically fit, and could be spared from their civil employment. The response was large, and some hundreds of men were supplied to become officers in the British Army or in the Indian Reserve of Officers. Earlier in the war the Colonial Government had already enabled a considerable number of men to go to the front, 287 passages having been provided from the funds of the Straits Settlements up to the end of 1915.

All parts of British Malaya sent what white men could be

spared. In Kelantan, for instance, it was estimated that nearly 28 per cent. of the small number of British residents went to serve and seven were killed, one of whom was a Brigadier-General; while a former manager of a mine in the State of Trengganu, a Major in the Royal Engineers, won the D.S.O., and M.C. But it has not been possible to ascertain the exact number either of those who went on overseas service or of the casualties and distinctions. Including those only whose names were recorded by the military authorities,

258 joined H.M.'s Forces from the Straits Settlements;

345 joined H.M.'s Forces from the Federated Malay States;

44 joined H.M.'s Forces from States outside the Federation;

183 joined H.M.'s Forces unattached.

This makes a total of 830 exclusive of the officers in the Malay States Guides, and 1,000 has been given as an estimate of the Europeans from Malaya who went on active service overseas. But this estimate is undoubtedly too low. It was common knowledge that many went to the United Kingdom at their own expense and there enlisted or were given commissions. Those who went home in 1914-15, whether aided or unaided, exceeded 400, and in 1917-18 were more than 600, while during part of 1915 and throughout 1916 some were provided with passages by the War Office, and many paid their own passages, joining up without any help from military head-quarters other than a recommendation from the General. There was also an appreciable number on leave in England at the time when the war began, who joined up at once. Several officers obtained the double distinction of D.S.O. and Military Cross, and several either the D.S.O. or the M.C. One name deserves special mention, that of Colonel-Commandant Hubback, C.M.G., D.S.O. At the outbreak of the war he was a member of the Civil Service of the Federated Malay States and was the Lieutenant-Colonel commanding the Malay States Volunteer Rifles, being largely responsible by his personal influence for the efficiency and high tone of that corps. He was given a Major's commission in the Territorial Force and rose to the rank of Brigadier-General.

Several Eurasians and Asiatics joined up in the rank and file of an Anglo-Indian battalion and did good service on the North-West Frontier of India, and some enlisted in the

United Kingdom and served in the war areas. Personal service too was given overseas outside the fighting lines. In 1916 the Government of India requested the G.O.C. Singapore to raise a Chinese Labour Corps for service in Mesopotamia. Attempts to form a corps from local sources were not successful, owing to the high wages then being offered in Malaya and to the fact that there were very few unplaced Chinese available. Arrangements were therefore made for the recruitment of men of suitable stamp in Amoy. A full complement of upwards of 900 coolies was obtained, but just at the time when they were ready to embark they were held up at that port in consequence, as was definitely proved, of German influences. Recruiting eventually took place in Hong Kong, labourers were brought from Amoy to Hong Kong and signed on there, and to complete the required numbers about 250 were recruited in Singapore. In all upwards of 900 were recruited and sent to Basra, clothed and equipped, and rationed for six months from local sources. After some months of service in Mesopotamia, during the hottest months, they were found not wholly suitable for coolie work in that country, and after about one year they returned to Singapore where they were paid off, the whole of the cost being borne by the Imperial Government. The corps was officered by gentlemen drawn from the Malay States Rifles, and on its disbandment the officers were employed in other capacities in Mesopotamia, one of them rising to the rank of Major and gaining an honour. A demand for a Chinese theatre for Basra was made by India upon Singapore and was duly complied with.

While this coolie corps was being recruited, military headquarters at Singapore were very busy in obtaining flat-bottomed stern-wheel river-boats and launches for Mesopotamia; and before the break of the south-west monsoon in 1916 two tows of 6 launches each and a steamer loaded with 10 stern-wheelers in sections, as well as many launches carried as deck cargoes, were dispatched. In addition, head-quarters bought and forwarded to India 4,000 tons of timber monthly for nine months, and purchased on behalf of India tinned milk and pine-apples in very large quantities, as well as many hundreds of Ford motor cars and motor-lorries.

Throughout the war, too, and for a time longer, the Straits Settlements supplied monthly for service in East Africa and Mesopotamia a great number of skilled Chinese artisans of

all trades, as well as railway subordinates, telegraphists, non-enlisted motor-drivers, clerks, and accountants, Eurasian and Asiatic. This was over and above a number of officers who were employed in the administrative and technical services. Up to January 1918 this additional work, which was very considerable, devolved upon the ordinary staff at military headquarters at Singapore, being carried out most efficiently by Captain H. R. S. Law during 1916, and subsequently by Major A. H. G. Peineger. When, in January 1918, it was found that the work was too much for the existing staff, Lieutenant-Colonel W. P. Hume, C.M.G., was for the special purpose transferred from the General Staff at Simla to the staff of the G.O.C.S.S. at Singapore. Prior to the war he was an officer of the F.M.S. Civil Service with very large administrative experience and a thorough knowledge of the labour conditions throughout the peninsula, and the smooth working of the department which he controlled until June 1919 was in the main due to his tact and foresight. During 1918 there was a growing shortage of skilled labour in the Peninsula; it was therefore necessary to have regard to civil requirements when recruiting the labour required by the armies in the field.

In 1917-18 a Malay Ford Van Motor Company, on a military basis, was raised and commanded by Major Nevill Stevens, a member of the Malay States Volunteer Rifles, and sent for service in Mesopotamia and Persia, where it did good work. The strength of the company was 8 officers and 120 rank and file. The rank and file were chiefly Malays. The officers were British, and a proportion of the warrant officers and non-commissioned officers were drawn from Europeans then employed in Malaya who were not passed fit for the more active branches of the service. In other matters which were not handled by military head-quarters, chiefly in connexion with the purchase of mechanical plant and the recruitment of a certain class of artisans, a special committee called the River-Craft Committee was formed and worked under civil direction in close co-operation with military head-quarters. Eventually the River-Craft Committee handed over its functions to military head-quarters. Mr. A. Agnew, C.B.E., manager of the Asiatic Petroleum Company, was chairman, Captain H. R. S. Law was secretary.

As has already been stated, the colony of the Straits Settlements pays a large annual sum towards the cost of the

Imperial garrison at Singapore. Payments began in 1868, the year after the Settlements were severed from India and handed over to the control of the Colonial Office. In 1896, by a local ordinance passed under instructions from the Home Government, a sum equivalent to  $17\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of the colonial revenue was appropriated as a fixed annual contribution 'in full return for the annual cost of the Imperial garrison including the cost of maintenance of all military works and buildings' but not including any capital expenditure upon such lands and buildings, with the proviso, which has been mentioned, that in no year should the sum paid exceed the actual cost of the garrison for that year. In 1899 the contribution was increased to 20 per cent. of the revenue. After the war began, the redistribution of the military forces resulted in the military expenditure falling short of the amount of the statutory contributions, and the sums recoverable by the Colony were :

	£	s.	d.
1913-14 . . . . .	4,258	11	5
1914-15 . . . . .	111,918	17	9
1915-16 . . . . .	96,569	4	9
1916-17 . . . . .	170,921	17	5
1917-18 . . . . .	59,000	0	0
Total . . . . .	442,668	11	4

At a meeting of the Legislative Council held on the 31st of March 1916, the view was expressed that the Colony should not take advantage of a temporary shortage in the Imperial forces as being an incident of the war, and it was unanimously decided not to claim a rebate of the excess; a similar decision was taken in the following years, with the result that the Colony made a present to the Home Government of a sum of close on £400,000. The gift was the more noteworthy in that the amount of the military contribution had always been held in the Straits Settlements to be excessive. Meanwhile, in 1916, committees were appointed alike in the Colony and in the Federated Malay States to consider how best taxation could be imposed for the purpose of making a direct and adequate contribution in money towards the prosecution of the war. In the Colony, at a meeting of the Legislative Council held on the 15th of June 1916, a resolution that an annual contribution of £200,000 should be made from the funds of the Colony was agreed to unanimously. This contribution was in the first instance to continue for a period of five years from the 1st July



1916, and to be extended for a further period of five years if, at the expiration of that period, the finances of the Colony permitted of its continuance. The contribution was to be paid half yearly, and in order to assist towards providing the funds the duty on liquors was increased and a duty on tobacco was introduced by legislation passed at the same meeting. This ordinance was entitled as being 'for the purpose of making an annual contribution to the Imperial Government towards war expenditure' and it was to remain in force till the end of 1926. While this annual contribution of £200,000 was welcomed by all members of the Legislative Council, it was considered by some of them to be inadequate, and the question of the best method of increasing the financial assistance given by the Colony to the Imperial Government was referred by the Governor to a committee representative of all sections of the community. This committee recommended certain forms of additional taxation for the purpose, but before legislation to authorize the new taxes was passed, opinion veered in favour of a war tax based on income, and an ordinance imposing such a tax and directing that the net proceeds of the collection of the tax should be given to the Imperial Government became effective as from the 1st of January 1917. Incomes below £350 were exempt from this war tax, but incomes of £350 and above were made subject to a graduated tax rising from 1 to 6 per cent. on incomes of £1,400 and over. The net sum was to be paid to the Imperial Government 'as a contribution towards defraying the expense incurred in the prosecution of the present war'. The proceeds of the 1917 war tax, £400,000, were in due course paid to the Imperial Treasury, the proceeds of the 1918 tax, amounting to £475,000, were also paid, and a sum of £525,000 was paid as the proceeds of the 1919 tax. The Government also gave part of its 1920 (post-war) collection of income tax to the Imperial Government in connexion with the war. The gift was one which, when added to the sum of £200,000 promised for 1920, and to the cost of the garrison for the year, would bring the total up to the round figure of £1,000,000.

Towards the end of the year 1916 the question of the sale of War Loan Bonds similar to Imperial Exchequer Bonds, but in local currency, was considered, and an ordinance was passed authorizing the raising of a War Loan, the proceeds to be lent to the Imperial Government. The sale of these bonds,

which bore interest at 6 per cent., resulted in remittances to the Imperial Treasury of £4,939,000 as loans by the Colonial Government at 5 per cent. interest. A further issue of such bonds bearing interest at  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. was authorized by legislation in 1918, which resulted in remittances to the Imperial Government of £3,341,000 on loan at  $5\frac{1}{4}$  per cent. interest.

The Colony was, in the meanwhile, bearing additional expenditure on war services. The volunteers had to be mobilized to carry out duties usually performed by the garrison troops. Examination services had to be maintained at the ports of Singapore and Penang, and a censorship had to be established, while the maintenance of interned enemy subjects, many of them not previous residents in the Colony, was a large item of expense. The cost to the Colony of these services amounted to approximately £380,000. This was exclusive of the cost of passages of fighting men, which amounted in all to £9,250, and of payments, amounting to £18,250, to Government servants to make up the difference between their army pay and their civilian salaries.

As has been noted, the Federal Council of the Federated Malay States had, in November 1912, shown their attachment to the cause of the Empire by a resolution offering a first-class armoured ship to His Majesty's Government. The resolution was proposed by the Sultan of Perak and seconded by the Sultan of Selangor. The proposer, Sultan Idris, ruler of Perak since 1887 and ever a most sure and constant supporter of the Empire, died in January 1916. Shortly afterwards, on the 28th of March 1916, the Federated Malay States Government passed in Federal Council an Enactment to authorize the raising of a loan of \$15,000,000 for the purposes of the war. The money was to be invested locally with the Government by the issue of debentures in order that the sum so raised might be placed at the disposal of His Majesty's Government for the prosecution of the war. Interest at 6 per cent. was to be paid on the debentures, which were to be redeemable at par on and after the 1st of May 1921. The loan was over-subscribed by \$2,000,000, and the debentures were generally at a fair premium. In the following October, in order to attract the money of poorer investors, a 'War Loan Investment Trust of Malaya' was incorporated by law, which had no marked success at first, but subsequently secured a substantial sum for the war.

At a further meeting of the Council, on the 14th of November 1916, it was unanimously resolved that having regard to the general wish on the part of the various communities residing in the Federated Malay States that a contribution should be made to the Imperial Government for the prosecution of the war, and that special taxation should be imposed for the purpose, a committee should be appointed to advise as to the amount of the contribution, and the means by which the sum could be raised. In the speeches on the motion, it was made clear that the people of the Federated Malay States were unanimous as to making the contribution, but were divided in opinion as to the means. A large and representative committee was appointed. It reported in December 1916; and as a result of its recommendations the 'War Taxation Enactment 1916' (No. 27 of 1916) was passed on the 30th December 1916. Its preamble was as follows:

'Whereas it is desirable that a contribution payable out of the revenues of the Federated Malay States be made to His Britannic Majesty's Government to assist the prosecution of the War in which the British Empire is engaged; and whereas it is expedient for the purpose of such contribution that further taxation be imposed.'

Under the enactment an additional export duty was levied on tin, tin-ore, and rubber (with an exemption in favour of payers of income tax in the United Kingdom or in any other country to which the exemption might be applied), and an additional import duty on motor spirit and tobacco; a new import duty was levied on matches, motor vehicles, and component parts, and an additional fee on private motor-cars, while many of the stamp duties were increased.

As soon as the enactment was passed, His Highness the Sultan of Perak, the son and successor of Sultan Idris, moved, and His Highness the Sultan of Selangor seconded, that a contribution of £500,000 be made from the Federated Malay States funds during 1917 to the Imperial Government towards the expenditure of the war. It was also decided to contribute 15 per cent. of the net opium and liquor revenues for 1917, and the increased railway revenue resulting from the enhancement of the passenger fares. Towards the end of the year 1917 it was found that the income from the war taxes would greatly exceed the sum of £500,000 which had been voted; and, at a meeting of the Federal Council, on the 13th of November

1917, the Sultan of Perak moved, and the Sultan of Selangor seconded, that a further contribution of £500,000 be made (thus bringing the contribution up to one million pounds sterling), and that, if the revenue derived from the War Taxation Enactment, the percentage of the opium and liquor revenues and the enhanced railway revenue, should exceed £1,000,000, to pay the amount of such excess. The resolution was passed unanimously. At a meeting of the Federal Council on the 17th of November, the Sultans of Perak and Selangor respectively moved and seconded a resolution that a contribution of £750,000 be made during the year 1918 towards the war expenditure. The resolution was passed unanimously, and the War Taxation Enactment was continued in force for another year by Enactment No. 28 of 1917 which was passed at a meeting held on the 30th of November 1917. The income actually derived in 1917 from the sources of revenue mentioned above amounted to £1,015,000; and the excess of £15,000 was remitted to the Imperial Treasury.

The three following statements summarize the contributions made by the Government of the Straits Settlements, by that of the Federated Malay States, and by the Governments of Malay States outside the Federation:

*Contributions by the Government of the Straits Settlements*

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
1. <i>Contributions in money.</i>						
6 per cent. War Loan . . . . .	4,939,000	0	0 <sup>1</sup>			
5½ " " " " . . . . .	3,341,000	0	0			
				8,280,000	0	0
2. <i>Government Investments in Imperial Loans.</i>						
By Currency Commissioners . . . . .	4,150,849	8	0			
By Colonial Government . . . . .	1,126,315	15	9			
By Savings Bank . . . . .	1,578	18	9			
				5,278,744	2	6
3. <i>Gifts.</i>						
Defence contribution (refunds forgone)	396,946	12	4			
Annual contributions (since 1st July 1916 to end of July 1919) . . . . .	600,000	0	0			
War Taxes 1917 and 1918 . . . . .	875,000	0	0			
The King's Fund for Disabled Soldiers	50,000	0	0			
				1,921,946	12	4
Grand total . . . . .				15,480,690	14	10

In addition to the sums mentioned in this list, the Colonial Government gave £10,000 to the Prince of Wales' Fund.

<sup>1</sup> As stated above on p. 394, the £4,939,000 which the Colony raised at 6 per cent. was lent to the Imperial Government at 5 per cent., and the £3,341,000 raised at 5½ per cent. was lent at 5½ per cent. In other words, the Colony made a present to the Home Government of 1 per cent. on the first loan and ½ per cent. on the second.



and gifts of aeroplanes. Moreover, some of the Governments contributed in other ways. Thus the Government of the Federated Malay States gave dollar for dollar subscribed by companies operating in those States which had head-quarters in England, in order to provide assistance to the disabled fighting men resident in or connected with the States and to the dependants of the killed. A similar course was adopted by the Government of Johore.

The private subscriptions from British Malaya to war charities, so far as they have been recorded, amounted to about £747,000. The many objects for which support was asked during the war were here, as elsewhere, abundantly aided. In all parts of the Empire the Prince of Wales' National Relief Fund was a first call upon public and private generosity. A public meeting on its behalf, presided over by the Governor, was held at Singapore on the 5th of October 1914, and by the end of the year nearly \$193,000 had been subscribed to the fund in Singapore, over \$68,000 in Penang, and nearly \$8,000 in Malacca, 20 per cent. of the Singapore subscriptions being allotted to the relief of local distress. In the Federated Malay States the subscriptions to this fund amounted to \$127,007. In Kelantan the Sultan took the lead in starting a subscription list for the fund, and £1,500 were forthcoming from this State. The Rajah of the little state of Perlis undertook to collect for it from his people. The Red Cross was splendidly supported and 'Our Days' were most fruitful. In the Colony the Red Cross owed much to the Colonial Secretary, Mr. (now Sir) F. S. James, and it was mainly due to his excellent organization and unceasing effort that the sum raised was so large. Outside the two great reservoirs of beneficence, the Colony and the Federated Malay States, large sums were sent from Johore, in 1917 alone \$164,000 (over £19,000) of which the Sultan personally gave \$20,000. In that same year 'Our Day' was held for the first time in the very undeveloped state of Trengganu and a sum of \$18,600 was subscribed, of which the kindly Sultan, who died subsequently to the armistice, gave \$2,000. From Kedah in 1917 the Red Cross received a sum of \$52,000. Much money was given by Asiatics to the various charities. Chinese in British Colonies and Protectorates are conspicuously openhanded in supporting philanthropic objects, and in the Malay Peninsula they gave most liberal subscriptions to the

various war funds. At the same time they were generous in offers of assistance in many other ways, private motor-cars, for instance, being placed unreservedly at the disposal of the military authorities. The Malay Sultans and Rajahs gave a noble lead to their peoples in the matter of subscriptions. Nor was the East Indian community in any way behind. Indians gave handsomely, according to their means, to war relief funds, especially to those connected with India and to the Red Cross. We read of contributions to the Red Cross from the Sikh soldiers serving in Kelantan, and the very poorest classes supported 'Our Day'. There was an instance of an Indian who insisted on offering his whole life's savings, \$500, as a thank-offering for the security which he had enjoyed under the British flag during 35 years in the Straits Settlements, and again of an Indian cook on low wages who offered half a month's pay for several months.

War Charities in the Federated Malay States were more or less organized under a General War Relief Fund. The managers of this fund directed the stream of giving more especially towards the six following objects.

- (i) The Auxiliary Hospital Fund ;
- (ii) Assistance to those who went to the war from the Federated Malay States and were incapacitated by war service ;
- (iii) Belgian National Relief ;
- (iv) Serbian Relief ;
- (v) Lord Roberts' Memorial Fund for Disabled Soldiers ;
- (vi) The British Red Cross.

The first of these objects calls for special notice. It was an auxiliary military hospital in England. The scene of the hospital was Blackmore End, Kimpton, in Hertfordshire, about two miles from Wheathampstead Station. The house and grounds were lent for the purpose by the owner, Mrs. Vincent-Baxendale. Part of the hospital staff was provided for at a house at Porter's End, about three-quarters of a mile away. The hospital was at first affiliated to the 1st Eastern General Hospital at Cambridge, but, from the 1st of May 1917, became an auxiliary of the Edmonton General Military Hospital. By the end of November 1915 hospital accommodation was ready for 80 patients, who began to come in two or three days later, and by the end of the year the wards were more than full.

In May 1916, by the erection of two outside wards, the accommodation was increased to 166 beds, the building of a third ward brought the actual number of beds up to a total of 210, a very fine X-ray installation was supplied at the expense of the Boustead firms of London and Kuala Lumpur, a recreation room was added, private donors supplied a billiard table and cinema apparatus, facilities were given to convalescents for learning arts and crafts work, and poultry keeping was tried with much success. The hospital was finally closed on the 31st of March 1919, with a total admission record of 2,507 patients. The gross total receipts, when furniture and stores had been disposed of, amounted to a little over £69,000, to which remittances from the Central Committee in the Federated Malay States contributed nearly £32,000, the subscribers being of all races; donations in England amounted to a little over £2,600; and the British Government paid nearly £28,000 towards the maintenance of the patients. In the end there was a balance of some £7,000, which sum, by the desire of the Central Committee, was transferred to the Federated Malay States War Relief Fund Committee in England, over which Sir Edward Brockman, K.C.M.G., presided. The managing committee of the hospital were fortunate in having an excellent chairman, Sir William Taylor, K.C.M.G., a former Resident-General of the Federated Malay States. Until the end of December 1917 the Hon. Secretary and Quartermaster of the hospital, at once an energetic secretary and a generous donor, was Mr. G. Harold Day; and up to the same date Miss E. M. Willis was a most efficient matron, with a nursing staff under her which included a number of V.A.D. workers. Until he was compelled by ill health to resign in May 1917, the medical officer in charge was an old member of the medical service of the Federated Malay States, Captain G. D. Freer, R.A.M.C. He was succeeded by Mr. C. S. Atkin, who had been from the beginning resident medical officer. From various great hospitals came consultants and specialists of high repute, and the Army Council registered their thanks to the staff of the hospital for wholehearted devotion to the patients entrusted to their care. The Council also thanked the people of the Malay States, expressing deep appreciation of their valuable and generous assistance. In truth the whole undertaking had been well conceived and equally well worked out,



a very admirable and practical tribute from an Eastern Protectorate to Great Britain and her fighting men.

It was in the Federated Malay States also that the very successful Malayan Air Squadron Fund originated, the campaign for raising it being organized by a resident in those States, Mr. C. Alma Baker, who initiated a similar movement in Australia. The first appeal was issued on the 15th of March 1915, and the donor of the first aeroplane was a Chinese member of the Federal Council of the Malay States, Mr. Eu Tong Sen, O.B.E. For aeroplanes and for tanks also the Chinese gave liberally. The Press supported the movement, the *Straits Times* in particular, and subscriptions flowed in from all parts of British Malaya, from the Federated Malay States, the Colony of the Straits Settlements, from Johore, Kedah, Kelantan, Trengganu, Brunei. In all, British Malaya provided 53 aeroplanes at a cost of nearly £111,000. Of this total the fund accounted for 36 planes at a cost of some £70,000, and the balance of 17 planes at a cost of £40,000 was contributed by the Sultan of Johore, who gave in all 16 planes, and the Sultan of Kedah, who gave 1.

Among smaller subscriptions from the Federated Malay States was a sum of nearly £6,000 to the Navy League Overseas Relief Fund for the benefit of dependants of officers and men of the Royal Navy, to which these States had given the *Malaya*, and of the Navy Auxiliary Forces and Mercantile Marine.

In an address to the Council of the Federated Malay States in November 1918 Sir Arthur Young stated that subscriptions to war funds and charities from British Malaya had, up to the 30th of September 1918, amounted to \$5,172,174, the principal items being :

	\$
Our Day (Red Cross) made up of 10 separate funds	1,739,770
Prince of Wales' Fund (8 separate funds)	663,626
Malayan Air Squadron	599,137
F.M.S. War Relief	430,133
King George's Fund for Sailors	280,457
Blind Soldiers and Sailors (11 funds)	248,084
Planters' War Relief Fund of Malaya	153,083
Y.M.C.A. Huts	105,399

Other war charities which were supported, many in number, included an Officers' Families Fund, of which Lady Ridout was Hon. Treasurer.

Headed by the wife of the Governor and High Commissioner,

Lady Evelyn Young, the ladies of the Colony and Protectorates were unremitting in war work. Those who received the Order of the British Empire were Mrs. Aldworth, Mrs. Clumeck, Mrs. Ebdon, Mrs. Lee Choon Guan, and Lady Nicholson.

Among other prominent war workers were Mrs. Darbishire, Mrs. (now Lady) James, Mrs. Newman, Mrs. Smallwood, Mrs. Saunders, and Mrs. Swindell.

The beginning of the war found the Malay Peninsula in full tide of prosperity. For many years past, allowing for occasional and temporary checks such as occur in all communities, the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States had been rich and flourishing to a degree equalled in few other parts of the British Empire, surpassed in none, and surpluses had been used to promote further development in Malaya. A few years back it was stated on high authority that over 40 per cent. of the world's tin is mined in those States, and a large proportion of the world's rubber supplies comes from the Malay Peninsula. The tin mines, the plantations of rubber, rice, and other tropical products which attracted immigrants in many thousands year by year, Chinese more especially as miners, Tamils from Southern India as labourers on the plantations, the open ports, centres of an immense volume of trade with Europe, the United States, India, and all parts of the Far East, made British Malaya a hive of industry and a scene of perpetually growing wealth, guaranteed by assurance of security for life and property and of evenhanded justice.

Early in 1914 there had been a failure of a large Chinese bank, which gave a set-back for the time to the operations of various Chinese firms, and, when the war came, the stoppage of imports to and exports from Germany, Austria, and Belgium meant loss of trade valued at over £100,000 a month. Notwithstanding, in the Colony of the Straits Settlements the year 1914 closed with a record revenue much larger than the revenue of 1913.

The early days of the war had been a very critical time, which had to be faced by the acting Governor, Mr. Wilkinson, Sir Arthur Young being, as has been told, in England at the time. Trade and shipping suddenly stood still, and the problem at once arose how to deal with the swarm of immigrants brought in by and dependent upon industries which threatened to stand still also. Tin mining alone employed some 250,000

Chinese coolies. The Colony, fortunately, had ample funds in hand and immediately available, but it was not so with the Federated Malay States, whose cash balances happened to be low at the moment and whose investments could not be realized. The Colonial Government took prompt action. On the 3rd of August, the day before war was actually declared, it prohibited further immigration of Chinese and East Indians, and subsequently, providing the necessary funds both for the Colony and for the Federated Malay States, in co-operation with the Governments of those States, it bought up tin, made advances against rubber, thereby enabling those two key industries to be kept in motion, and repatriated a large number of the workers. Thus an industrial crisis, which, in view of the floating character of a large proportion of the population, might easily have become a grave upheaval, was safely tided over and, after the initial difficulties caused by the war had been surmounted, there supervened, with the exception of the mutiny at Singapore and the minor rising in Kelantan, a time of war-fed prosperity.

Among initial difficulties the presence of enemy aliens was common to all parts of the Empire, and at Singapore, as at Hong Kong, the representatives of German firms were much in evidence, for Germany had taken full advantage of British open ports and freedom of trade in the Far East. At first enemy aliens were not interned. On the 7th of August some German reservists, who tried to take passages in order to join the garrison of Tsingtao, were made prisoners of war but were released on parole, and all German subjects were placed under restrictions and required to sign undertakings not to attempt to leave the Colony. A little later, on the 25th of October, all enemy subjects were interned, and it has been told how the internment camp at Singapore was forced by the mutineers. Little trouble, however, either on that occasion or at any other time, was given by the foreign residents of enemy origin. Five ordinances were passed in the Colony in the course of the war to provide for winding up the estates of alien enemies, and Trading with the Enemy ordinances were numerous, one of them providing for a custodian of enemy property, who was the Treasurer of the Colony. In 1916 an ordinance was passed to cancel the facilities given by law to the Deutsche Asiatische Bank; in 1917 legal provision was

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made against political propaganda by alien missionaries ; and, when the war was over, an ordinance restricted the admission to the Colony of former enemy aliens.

In 1915 the revenue of the Colony showed a small increase on the receipts of 1914, constituting a new record. There was an increase in the value of trade, in spite of a decrease in shipping, the increase, as might be expected, being mainly in an eastward direction, away from Europe, with Japan and the United States of America. In 1916 there was an immense increase of revenue. A Tobacco Duties Ordinance was passed in that year for the express purpose of making a contribution to the expenses of the war, but it was not war taxation that was mainly responsible for the greatly increased receipts : the increase was due to the abnormal demand which the war created for what the Malay Peninsula could supply, and to consequently abnormal prices. The value of the trade in money mounted in spite of steady decrease in shipping. The year 1917 told the same tale. Again there was a great increase in revenue, helped by added duties on alcoholic liquors and tobacco for the purposes of war contributions, and there was an increase also in the value of trade, very especially in that of export trade to the United States. Rubber was at a premium, and rubber cultivation extended to the detriment of the cultivation of rice and other local foodstuffs. There was, it is true, some extension of rice growing, but not sufficient to bring down the high price of food. The shortage of shipping led to a committee of inquiry as to the amount of shipping which was absolutely necessary to maintain the life of the colony, and the committee of inquiry was followed by the appointment of a standing shipping committee. Food control regulations were also issued, and a committee, with sub-committees, was instituted for the purpose of food control, while cultivation clauses were inserted in new leases. In 1918 the increase in revenue was greater than ever, and in 1919, the centenary year of Singapore, the figures mounted again, the revenue of the colony being now in figures more than double of what it had been before the war. Yet trade had somewhat fallen off in value in 1918, the price of rubber had gone down, and for a brief space there was a crisis in that all-important industry due to want of shipping and consequent accumulation of stock. Every available ship had been requisitioned to carry American

troops to Europe, and the import of rubber into the United States had been restricted. Local shipping in the Peninsula was now placed under direct Government control, and the problem of food-supply became so pressing that, after the armistice had been signed, on Christmas Day 1918, a food controller was appointed, the Colonial Secretary, Mr. James, undertaking the duty.

The record of the Federated Malay States in the war followed closely that of the colony, except at the beginning, when these States, being the great area of production, felt the crisis more acutely and were not for the moment so well prepared to meet it from cash in hand. Both revenue and trade in 1914 showed a decrease on the years 1912 and 1913. The revenue of 1915 improved upon that of 1914, but was still short of the total reached before the war : the value of imports was smaller than in any of the years 1911 to 1914, but the value of exports showed a great increase, due to higher price of tin, to higher price and larger output of rubber. In March 1915 an import duty was placed on tobacco, and the import duties on malt liquor were increased. In 1916 there was a very large rise of revenue, and the total receipts for the year far exceeded those of any previous year : the value of imports also rose, but still fell short of the figures for the years 1912-14 ; the increase in the value of exports was immense. The year 1917 told the same tale of abounding financial prosperity, the high price of tin compensating for smaller output. In 1918 the revenue still rose slightly, but there was a decrease in the value of exports owing to the fall in price of rubber. In 1919 a slight further increase of revenue was recorded, and the value both of imports and of exports transcended that of all former years. Throughout the war the value of imports had fallen below the level of the two previous years, and in 1919, when the war was over, the rise was phenomenal. As in the colony, so in the Federated Malay States, it was found necessary in 1917 to constitute a food control committee and in 1918 to replace the committee by a single food controller.

Outside the Federated Malay States, Johore, close neighbour of Singapore, followed its lead and its fortunes. The Sultan was conspicuous in loyal personal effort as in generous gifts to war funds, and his services were marked by the honorary distinctions of G.C.M.G. in 1916, K.B.E. in 1918. At the very

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beginning of the war he placed himself and his armed forces unreservedly at the disposal of the General Officer Commanding in the Straits Settlements : it has been seen that at the time of the mutiny immediate help was forthcoming from Johore ; and from the early months of 1915 till the end of the war Johore troops formed part of the garrison of Singapore, 200 of them being present at the peace celebrations. The war had the same general effect in Johore as elsewhere in Malaya, great prosperity, as measured in money, in 1916 and 1917, a set-back in rubber in 1918, record figures again in 1919. What Johore is to Singapore, Kedah is to Penang, with a still older tie, for Penang, the oldest of the Straits Settlements, was bought or leased for an annuity from the Sultan of Kedah. The war story in this and in all the States was in varying degrees one and the same : the war brought abnormal wealth, Kedah being able in 1917 to invest \$500,000 in the Straits Settlements War Loan : the rulers took the lead in giving to the funds raised for war or charitable purposes : they reassured their Mohammedan subjects when Turkey entered into the war : with the exception of the small rising in Kelantan, their lands and their peoples were untroubled : they were friends of their British guides and admirably repaid their guidance : they were not moved by tidings of adversity, and when the end came they shared in the general rejoicing. In the words of an old Malay inhabitant of Pahang, in the Federated Malay States, when the armistice came, ' we behaved like children, for we were lighthearted '.

Outside the Malay Peninsula but within the circle of British Malaya, the little settlement of Labuan experienced none of the thrills of war and not more than a tolerable amount of its inconveniences. Excitement was caused when on August 5th 1914 the *Sandakan*, a N.D.L. steamer of some 1,500 tons, plying between Singapore and Borneo ports, entered the harbour flying the German Naval Reserve flag and was promptly captured, but thereafter life settled down to its usual round, the war being marked only by censorship, the recurrent departures of the European population to join up, and, in 1917 and 1918, by stagnation of trade. A pleasant feature was the public spirit and goodwill shown by all portions of the community, a goodwill particularly marked during 1917 and 1918 when trade was almost at a standstill and many seemed faced

with ruin. War charities and funds of all kinds were generously supported, and in 1918, which was financially a year of disaster, the amount subscribed for various purposes connected with the war constituted a record.

The position and circumstances of the State of Brunei did not permit of its playing any prominent part in the war; but throughout the war years His Highness the Sultan was a most faithful and devoted supporter of the British cause and lost no opportunity of impressing on his subjects their duties and obligations. The generosity with which the various war funds and charities were supported and the attitude of unswerving loyalty adopted by all classes showed that the efforts of the State were limited not by want of goodwill but by want of power.

Christmas Island lies rather under 200 miles south of Java, and is roughly as far distant from Singapore, with which it is incorporated, as from the north-west Coast of Australia, about 900 miles in either case. In 1913 it had a population of 1,500, 24 Europeans and the rest mainly Chinese, all, with the exception of the Government district officer and his staff, in the employment of the Christmas Island phosphates company, formed by Sir John Murray and Mr. Clunies Ross, the proprietor of the Cocos Islands group; for, until the rich deposits of phosphates of lime was brought to light, mainly through Sir John Murray's investigations, the island was uninhabited. It was the one part of the Colony of the Straits Settlements which suffered badly from the war, the chief markets for the phosphates having been Germany, Austria, and Scandinavia. The residents, who numbered rather over 1,500 at the end of 1913, had decreased by one-third at the end of 1914, and in 1915 the fortunes of the island were at their lowest ebb, barely 22,000 tons of phosphates being exported in that year, against 150,000 in 1913. In 1915 the whole export was sent to Australia. In 1916 there was a partial recovery, the bulk of the export being taken by Australia and the remainder by Japan. In 1917 there was further improvement, and Japan now took a larger proportion of the phosphates than Australia. In 1918, with the great scarcity of shipping, the export fell off again, and the end of the war brought much relief to this little corner of the Empire.

In estimating the part played by British Malaya in the war,

the twofold aspect of Singapore must be borne in mind. On the one hand it is the administrative and commercial centre of a group of British dependencies, great and prosperous in a rare degree. Since the war the battleship *Malaya* has visited the Malay Peninsula and the Federated Malay States, which gave her to the Empire ; of those States Mr. Churchill, at the Imperial Conference of 1921, said that ' they have given us more assistance than any other part of the Colonial Empire has been able to do ' ; and as it was with the Federated Malay States, so it was with the colony also, and in proportion with the smaller units of the British Malay Indies. But Singapore was not only the centre of this strong and wealthy section of the Empire : it was, at the same time, for naval and military purposes, a strategical point of first importance in the eastern seas, and in effect, during the war, an outpost of India, of which it had formed part prior to 1867. The services, then, which British Malaya could render to the Empire during the war were to make the best possible use of Singapore in safeguarding India and British interests in the east, to relieve the Home Government as far as possible of the men and the money needed for the defence of Singapore and of British Malaya generally, as well as for the maintenance of its life and industry, and—over and above the products of the Peninsula—to contribute what men and what money could be spared for overseas service and for the expenses of the war.

In the earlier period of the war, more especially, down to the end of 1915, before the Germans had begun to be effectually crippled, German efforts to make trouble in the east and, in particular, to import trouble into India were determined and well organized. The projected expedition to the Nicobar islands, to which reference has been made above, was in connexion with a German attempt to form a depot in those islands for arms to be used in and against India. From Singapore enemy communications could be and were successfully tapped and cut, and enemy schemes brought to nought. With good reason the German Consul-General at Batavia complained to the German Chancellor that plans were constantly known and countered at Singapore. But this vital point had to be kept safe, and in guarding it there was need to look inwards as well as outwards. The Singapore mutiny had been an ugly incident, and the large Indian population in the Peninsula was



drawn from all races and creeds, exposed to many disturbing influences and to insidious propaganda. But to their high credit the Indians stood firm and gave no trouble, much being due, it was said, to the strong personality and able work of a Parsee gentleman attached to the General Staff of the Straits Settlements, Mr. H. R. Kothavala, M.V.O., M.B.E., whose efforts were cordially supported by the leaders of all sections of the Indian community. At the end of the war the Indians held an impressive public meeting to celebrate the victory of the Allies, and the Addresses to His Majesty presented to the Governor on that occasion were eloquent of loyalty and devotion. The Chinese and the Malays were equally loyal and helpful. In short, taken as whole, the Asiatic races in British Malaya had a worthy record in the war. The European residents in their turn, as has been seen, showed in a marked degree sense of responsibility and self-sacrifice, and the verdict of the General Officer Commanding was that 'the wholehearted co-operation of the whole civilian population rendered the work of defence much easier'. It may be summed up that co-operation in defence of and for the benefit of the Empire was conspicuous in Malaya, co-operation between races, between classes, and between services. Sailors, soldiers, and civilians worked well together. What might have been a scene of serious weakness became a source of strength. Malaya on the land side provided in the main for her own defence, and did much in sending men and money to help overseas. Such effective co-operation meant tactful guidance—to say the least—on the part of the authorities, and a tribute should be paid to the General Officer Commanding, Sir Dudley Ridout, to the successive Admirals on the station, Sir Martyn Jerram, Sir Lowther Grant, and Sir Fred Tudor Tudor, and very especially to the personal example set by the Governor and High Commissioner, Sir Arthur Young.

## SECTION II

### THE COCOS ISLANDS

Five hundred miles west of Christmas Island, 600 miles from Java, and equidistant between Australia and Ceylon, about 2,000 miles in either case, are the Cocos-Keeling Islands. They consist of two atolls of coral formation. The main atoll, the Cocos Islands, are a string of small islands forming a horseshoe, and 15 miles north of this ring or horseshoe is the smaller atoll, a single island, Keeling Island. Just a century ago, in the year 1825, a Scotsman, Captain J. Clunies Ross, visited the islands, and two years later, in 1827, he came back with his family to settle in them. The Ross family have ever since been occupiers and proprietors of the group, ruling, in patriarchal fashion, a small community of Malays or mixed Malays, under 800 in number, and exploiting the product of the coco-nut trees which cover the islands. Since the Cocos have become part of the colony of the Straits Settlements, the head of the Ross family has been recognized as the representative of the Colonial Government and been given magisterial powers. The late Mr. George Clunies Ross, who died in July 1910, and who was grandson of the first proprietor, was a man of unusual capacity and force of character, and he joined with Sir John Murray in leasing and developing Christmas Island.

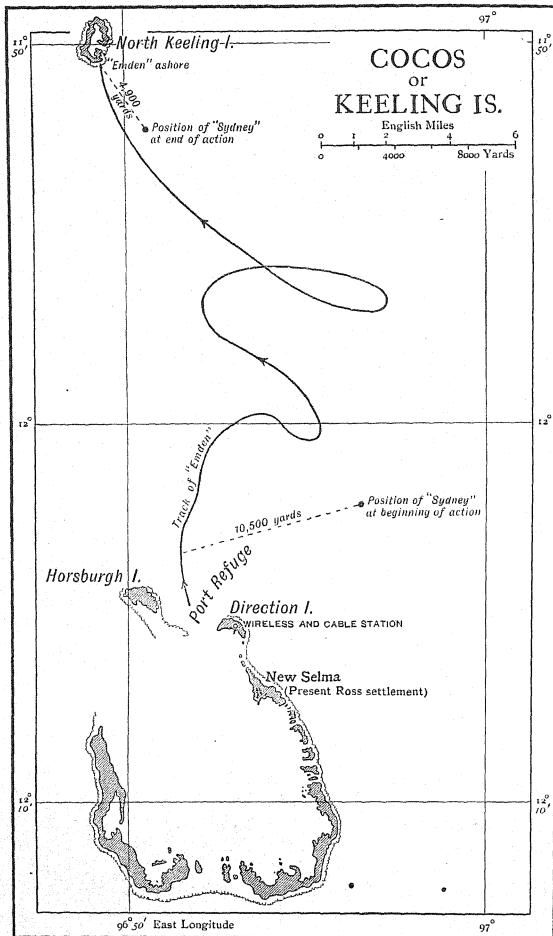
The islands came into the world, so to speak, when, in 1901, the Eastern Extension Australasia and China Telegraph Company planted a cable station in the group. The site of the station is on the inner side of the north-easternmost island of the Cocos atoll, now christened Direction Island, an islet about 1 mile long by 300 yards broad. The entrance to the jetty through the coral reef, Port Refuge as it is called, is on the west side of Direction Island, between that island and Horsburgh Island, the north-westernmost island of the ring. The existence of this station brought the Cocos Islands into the story of the war. When the war began it was both a submarine cable and a wireless station, and three submarine cables converged and diverged, connecting with Perth in

Western Australia in one direction, with Java and Singapore in another, and in a third with Rodrigues, Mauritius, and South Africa. In November 1914 the telegraph staff at the station numbered 29, exclusive of Chinese servants, and the superintendent was Mr. Farrant.

For three months the adventurous German raider, the *Emden*, had been roving the eastern seas, and her captain, Von Müller, had proved himself, in daring and resource, to be a latter-day Paul Jones. He had, it was said, accounted for a loss of 70,000 tons of Allied shipping, and damage to the amount of £2 millions. British Malaya had received his attention, for in the early dawn of the 28th of October he had run into Penang harbour, sunk a Russian light cruiser, and, on the way out, a French destroyer. Subsequently to this exploit Von Müller, who had possessed himself of two British Admiralty colliers,<sup>1</sup> rejoined one of them, the *Buresk*, off the coast of Sumatra, and with the other, the *Exford*, waiting for him in mid-ocean to the south, in the direction of the Cocos Islands, he made for those islands, taking the *Buresk* with him.

The *Emden* was a vessel of nearly 3,600 tons, armed with 10 4.1 guns. She was a three-funnelled ship, but Von Müller, on this, as on previous occasions, rigged up a fourth dummy funnel which now proved his undoing, for, as soon as the ship came in sight of the telegraph station flying no colours, the fourth funnel was recognized as 'palpably canvas' and wireless calls were immediately sent out. She was sighted at 5.30 on the morning of the 9th of November steaming at speed for the island. When nearly at the buoy which marked the outer entrance to the passage through the reef, she turned, disclosing under her quarter an armoured launch and two heavily manned boats which made at once for the jetty. The landing took place about 6.30 a.m. The number who actually landed, as given to the superintendent by their commander, Lieutenant Von Mücke, was three officers and 40 men, but, including those who were left in the boats, the total party seems to have numbered between 50 and 60. They had with them 4 machine guns, two in the launch and one in each of the boats. They blew up with dynamite the wireless mast and engineer's store, battered to pieces instruments, engines, dynamos, did some wilful and wanton damage, but respected

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 360.



private property and treated the inmates of the station with marked courtesy. 'The consideration shown us by the landing party', says a report, 'was beyond all praise.' They had less success in cutting cables than had the men of the *Nürnberg* at Fanning Island, and naturally gleaned no information from the superintendent, who, when asked the whereabouts of the cable ends, replied 'in the sea'. While the Germans on land were wrecking the station, the launch searched the foreshore for the cables; much of the little time was wasted in raising and coiling a spare length of cable laid out in the lagoon and leading to nowhere; eventually the Perth cable was found, raised, and with difficulty cut, about 300 yards out from the jetty, but the other two cables were not found or injured, and on the next day the broken ends of the Perth cable were found, raised, and lashed to a boat from the *Buresk* which the *Sydney* brought in after the battle, and communication with Australia was restored. The time taken in cutting the Perth cable contributed to the whole party being left behind. Between 8.45 and 9 a.m. the *Emden*, which had stood out a short way to sea, steamed in again with urgent messages of recall by flag and syren, before 9.30 the boats put off but they were too late, the ship had not waited for them, and they were compelled to return to land.

From the moment when the dummy funnel was detected, and even after the Germans had landed, until they took actual possession of the office and the wireless hut, calls were continually sent out, first 'strange ship at entrance', then '*Emden* here', and a cable message was also sent through to Singapore. The promptness and the constancy of the superintendent and those working under him deserved, as they subsequently received, the highest commendation, including letters of appreciation from the Secretary of State for the Colonies and from the Committee of Lloyd's. The Admiralty also presented chronometers to the superintendent and Dr. Ollerhead in recognition of their valuable services. At the time a convoy was coming from Australia, the ships passed to the east of the Cocos and on the night of the 8th were to the north of the group, having crossed the path of the *Emden*. Early on the 8th the most powerful of the ships in charge, the *Minotaur*, which had been the flagship on the China Station, had received orders to part with her consorts and make for

the Cape, the convoy being left under the command of Captain Silver on the Australian light cruiser *Melbourne*. On her way the *Minotaur* picked up the S.O.S. from the Cocos, passed it on to Captain Silver, who received it at 6.30 a.m. on the 9th, and at 7 a.m. he detached another Australian light cruiser, the *Sydney* under Captain Glossop, to steam at full speed for the Cocos. The *Sydney* was on the side of the convoy nearest to the islands. At 9.15 Glossop sighted land, and five minutes later the smoke of a ship, which proved to be the *Emden*, coming towards him at a high rate of speed. The *Sydney* was larger, faster, and more powerfully armed than the *Emden*; she was a four-funnelled vessel of 5,400 tons, mounted with eight 6-inch guns. But Von Müller invited battle, whether because he expected a weaker opponent or because he hoped by closing in, coupled with expert shooting at the outset, to disable a stronger ship than his own. It was about 9.30 when the *Sydney* came in sight from the island, at first being taken for another ship, the *Newcastle*, and then again for the *Yarmouth*. 'We had a beautiful day for the battle, calm and bright', runs a personal narrative from the telegraph station, and the beginning of the fight was watched as though it had been an absorbing cricket match. At 9.40 the *Emden* opened fire. To the onlookers on the shore the distance between the two ships seemed only to be about 3,700 yards, but, as a matter of fact, it was not far short of 6 miles. The general experience of Anglo-German seafights in the late war seems to have been that German marksmanship excelled at the outset of the battles and deteriorated as the fighting went on, while on the contrary British gunnery improved as the operators and gunners warmed to their work. In any case in this notable fight Captain Glossop reports that the fire of the *Emden* 'was very accurate and rapid to begin with', and such casualties as the *Sydney* suffered were all at the beginning of the battle. The guns of the *Sydney*, on the other hand, at first overshot the mark, and one of her range-finders was hit by a shell from the *Emden*, the operator being killed. But before a quarter of an hour had passed there was a different tale to tell. Having found his distance, and able to outrange and to outpace his adversary, Glossop had the *Emden* at his mercy. The two ships went north as they fought, the *Emden* more than once turning to the east, then doubling back to the north-west, the *Sydney*

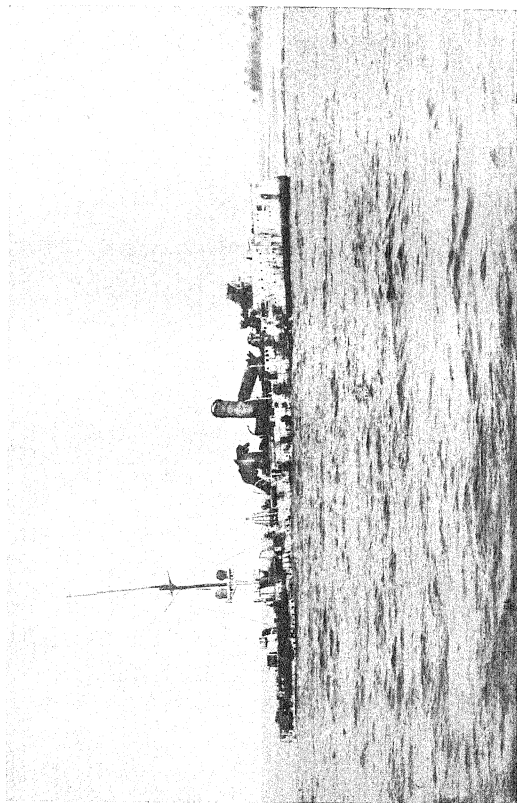
conforming to the enemy's movements, keeping her distance and well ahead. The Lyddite shells from the British ship made havoc of the German: one funnel and foremast went, range-finders and steering-gear were disabled, the German firing became slower and more erratic, the remaining two funnels were shot away, the ship was riddled with shot and burning fore and aft. Manœuvring against each other, the two vessels came near to Keeling Island. Glossop then realized that Von Müller meant to beach his sinking ship; he tried to cut him off but was too late, and what remained of the *Emden* was run hard on to the reef on the south side of the island. She grounded at 11.20, having fought with admirable gameness for one hour and forty minutes. Seeing her hard and fast, a helpless wreck, Glossop gave chase to the *Buresk*, attempting to escape to the north. He overtook her, but in a sinking condition by the action of her German prize crew. Taking off all on board, finally sinking the ship, leaving her two boats which he had taken in tow to pick up some men passed by in the water, he went back to the *Emden*. She was still flying the German colours. Repeated signals to surrender received no answer, and once more, very reluctantly, at 4.30 p.m. the guns were turned on again. Five minutes later the white flag was hoisted and the ensign hauled down. Glossop next went back to pick up the two boats, sent one of them in to the *Emden*, with the prize crew from the *Buresk* on board, to inform Von Müller that he would come back to his aid on the following morning, and then headed for Direction Island to ascertain how it had fared with the telegraph station and its staff. Night fell while he was on his way, and not till daylight on the following morning, the 10th, could he anchor off the island and send in two boats, the first bearing a white flag in the bows on the assumption that the Germans might be in possession. Having cleared up the situation, Glossop asked for and took on board the doctor at the station, Dr Ollerhead, with two or three of the company's staff as volunteer assistants and with medical stores, and leaving, as already told, one of the boats of the *Buresk* for the service of the staff, steamed off again to where the *Emden* lay. The work of relief was more arduous than the fighting. 'The conditions in the *Emden*', says the dispatch, 'were indescribable'; the decks were a litter of tangled ironwork amid which, as in a shambles, lay

dead and dying, and men with suppurating wounds. Von Müller having pledged his word that if all the living were taken on board the *Sydney*, they would be amenable to discipline and give no trouble, they were all laboriously trans-shipped, the wreck being on the weather side of the island and the swell strong. The wreck was cleared by 5 o'clock in the evening, but there remained to be picked up some 20 men who had made their way ashore, and one of whom, a German doctor, went mad and died. To find and embark them the ship went round to the lee side of the island. Night then came on again, and at dawn on the 11th a boat's crew was landed to complete the work of relief and bring the wounded to the embarking point. Meanwhile the *Sydney* took back the doctor to Direction Island and sent such cablegrams as were required. All this was in the early morning; by 10 o'clock the ship was back at Keeling Island, and within three-quarters of an hour later she left for Colombo with all the survivors on board. The German prisoners numbered 11 officers and 200 other ranks, of whom 3 officers and 53 men were wounded, four of them dying on the voyage. The *Sydney* had become an overcrowded hospital ship, but another vessel was sent to meet her and relieved her of most of the prisoners. The killed on the *Emden* were estimated approximately by Von Müller at 7 officers and 108 men. Including the landing party, therefore, the complement of the ship before the fight was not far short of 400. The casualties in the *Sydney* were small, four killed and 12 wounded. It had been a great duel. As in the case of the *Shannon* and the *Chesapeake*, the delight with which the British victory was hailed was a tribute to the prowess of the enemy. Von Müller had had three months of rare success, and when at last cornered he fought staunchly to the last. In the action and after it Captain Glossop proved admirably equal to a difficult emergency which might easily have been mishandled, and that a ship belonging to the newly-born Commonwealth Navy accounted for the *Emden* was a most legitimate source of pride to Australia.<sup>1</sup>

Left behind by the *Emden* the landing party returned to

<sup>1</sup> In compiling the above account much help has been derived from numbers of the *Zodiac* most kindly supplied through the General Manager of the Eastern Extension Australasia and China Telegraph Company. The illustration is reproduced from the *Zodiac* by the courtesy of the Editor.

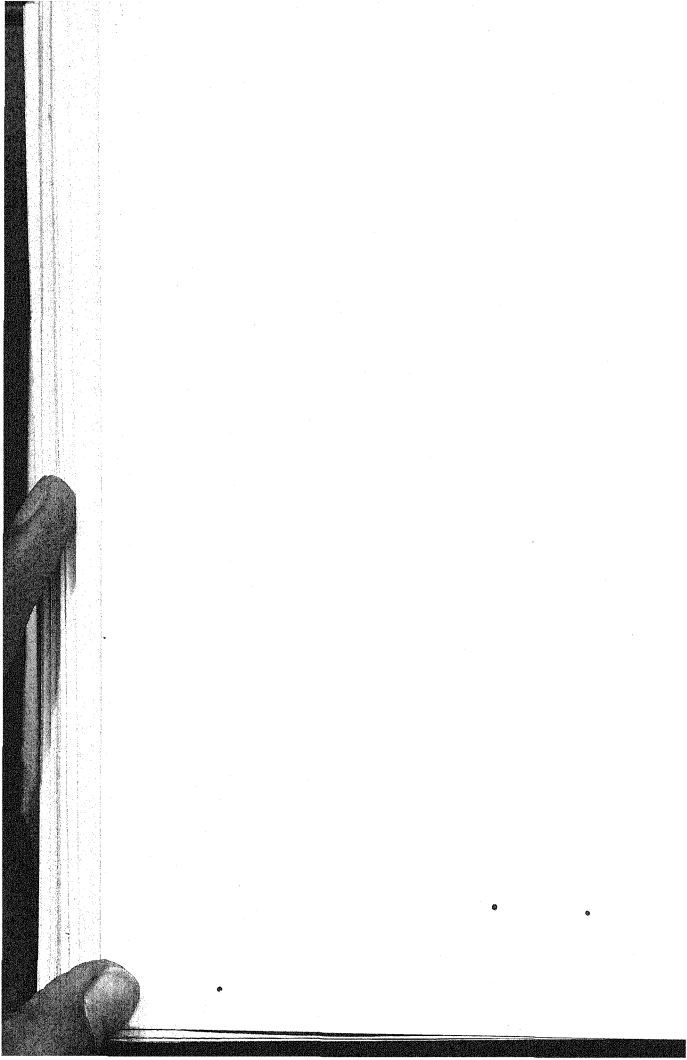




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the island. The German flag was hoisted, the telegraph employees were informed that they were now under German martial law, and were placed under an armed guard. All firearms had to be given up, and attempts to communicate with their friends at sea were prohibited under threat of drastic punishment. But otherwise they were not molested in any way, and Von Mücke agreed to the staff and their Chinese servants being allowed to leave for another island in the event of a British war ship arriving to shell the Germans out. While making initial preparations against attack from the sea, and placing the Maxim guns in position along the shore, the German commander explained that, if the *Emden* did not return by the evening, he intended to leave in the *Ayesha*, an old three-masted schooner of 70 tons, which was lying at the anchorage, the property of the Ross family, and formerly employed in plying to and from Batavia with cargoes of copra. What remained of the day was spent by the Germans in overhauling the old ship and making her ready for sea; provisions were requisitioned, which the Lieutenant politely said would be returned or paid for later—a promise exceedingly unlikely to be fulfilled. A good supply of drinking-water was placed on board, mattresses, pillows, cutlery and plate were taken, and old clothes were asked for and readily given, the English being only too glad to speed the departure of their unwelcome guests, and at the same time appreciating their good conduct and that they were taking a sporting risk. Late in the afternoon the steam launch towed the *Ayesha* and her own two cutters out through the reef, about six o'clock all the Germans were packed into the *Ayesha*, and with parting cheers they stood out to sea, covered by the night, before the *Sydney* came near the scene.

They set their course for the neutral Dutch port of Padang in Sumatra, about 700 miles away.<sup>1</sup> The odds were heavily against the survival of the overcrowded and hardly seaworthy ship, but she did survive, and on the 27th of November was safe in Padang harbour. After leaving Padang, Von Mücke

<sup>1</sup> For what follows see the account by Kapitan Lieutenant Hellmuth von Mücke, First Lieutenant of the *Emden*, translated and paraphrased by A. C. Hearn, which is given in the *Journal* of the Royal United Service Institution for February 1918. The Lieutenant's highly-coloured account of the fight between the *Emden* and the *Sydney*, which is made to last all day, is given in the number for November 1917.

cruised about outside territorial waters, waiting to pick up a German vessel, and on the 15th of December, parting with and sinking the *Ayesha*, which deserved better treatment at his hands, he transferred his party and himself to a Nord-deutscher Lloyd steamer of 1,700 tons, the *Choising*, which had originally been told off as a collier for the *Emden*. Hoisting the Italian flag, the *Choising* made for the Red Sea, slipped past Perim, and on the 9th of January 1915 the *Emden* party landed at Hodeida on the Arabian coast. After a vain attempt to make by land for the Hejaz Railway the Germans took to the sea again and, starting from a bay a little north of Hodeida in two native sailing vessels, landed on the 24th of March at Lidd, a point some distance south of Jidda. They had fighting with Bedouins on the land march to Jidda, two Germans being killed, one of them Lieutenant Schmidt, son of a German admiral. Having reached Jidda on the 8th of April they took to the sea again, eluded the British blockade, and finally landing 10 miles short of El Weg, they made their way to the Hejaz Railway at El Ula and eventually arrived at Constantinople. To the senior German officer there Von Mücke officially reported 'the landing party from the *Emden*, 5 officers, 7 petty officers and 37 men strong'. His account seems to show that four men had been killed or died on the way but, whatever were the exact numbers, and allowing for embroidery in the narrative, the record is one of singular courage and endurance, a very worthy and picturesque supplement to the story of the *Emden*.

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SIR WEST RIDGEWAY

## SECTION III

### NORTH BORNEO

THE State of North Borneo, of the size of Ireland, includes the northern end of the island of Borneo. The population was 208,000 at the last pre-war census, in 1911, but the figures of the 1921 census showed a large increase. The territory is under the administration of the British North Borneo Company, which was incorporated by Royal Charter in 1881. The President of the Court of Directors in London throughout the war was the Right Hon. Sir West Ridgeway, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., K.C.S.I., skilled in tropical administration as a late governor of Ceylon. Under the Court there is a local governor, who from 1915 onwards throughout the war was Mr. A. C. Pearson, afterwards C.M.G. The territory had made marked progress under the Company, as shown by the revenue and trade returns—the revenue being well maintained in spite of the war—but it is still in its infancy as regards development of the interior, and the possibilities of the future are great. It is rich in tropical products, rubber and tobacco being so far the best-known exports, and has great resources of timber and coal. The coast is singularly well harboured, the finest natural harbour being Sandakan Bay on the eastern side. The chief port on the west is Jesselton, which shares with Sandakan the honour of being the seat of administration; it is also the main terminus of some 120 miles of railway. An armed constabulary constituted the Defence Force of North Borneo in 1914, numbering 824 men, mainly Indians and natives of Borneo.<sup>1</sup>

Approximately 60 men from North Borneo served in His Majesty's Forces during the war. Of these 8 are known to have lost their lives in action, and 3 died while on active service. Of 14 members comprising the London staff at the outbreak of war 8 went on active service, while of the

<sup>1</sup> The account which follows was most kindly prepared in North Borneo for the purposes of this book and supplied through the President of the Court of Directors, Sir West Ridgeway.

remaining 6, 2 were over military age, and the other 4 enlisted in volunteer units.

Soon after the outbreak of war Town Guards were enrolled at the principal stations, and were armed from the Constabulary armoury. Training in drill and the use of arms proceeded actively. Early in 1915 the Town Guards were embodied in a force designated 'The British North Borneo Volunteer Rifles', which was enrolled under the direction of Captain H. V. Woon as commandant, with Lieutenant P. A. Dingle as adjutant, and in 1916 this force was officially recognized and incorporated by the Volunteer Ordinance 1916. Under this ordinance members of the force were required to serve for a period of two years, and were liable to be mobilized at any time. With few exceptions all British subjects in Borneo attested under this ordinance, and European, Malay and Chinese sections were formed under non-commissioned officers of their own nationality. The authorized strength was three officers and 197 other ranks. In October 1916 an ordinance was passed dividing the force into three categories, viz. :

(i) Active Service.

(ii) Reserve.

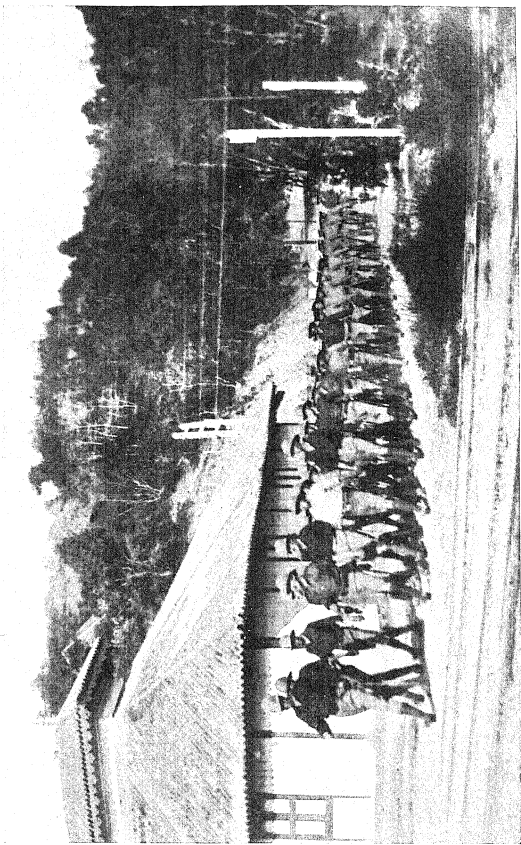
(iii) Civil Guard (for men over 40 years of age not attested under (i) and (ii)).

Registration under one or other of these categories was made compulsory for all male British subjects.

The force was divided into sections throughout the country, the head-quarters being at Jesselton. In spite of difficulties in training the men, arising from the fact that members were so scattered, a high standard of efficiency was attained. On four occasions the force was mobilized on the west coast and twice in Sandakan. On the last occasion the constabulary reserve was also called up, and the combined forces of the constabulary and the volunteers in camp numbered approximately 400 of all ranks.

A British North Borneo War Relief Fund, under the presidency of His Excellency the Governor, was inaugurated on the 23rd of June, 1915. The fund closed on the 31st of July, 1919, a total sum of £29,923 having been subscribed and distributed among 45 different charities, which included

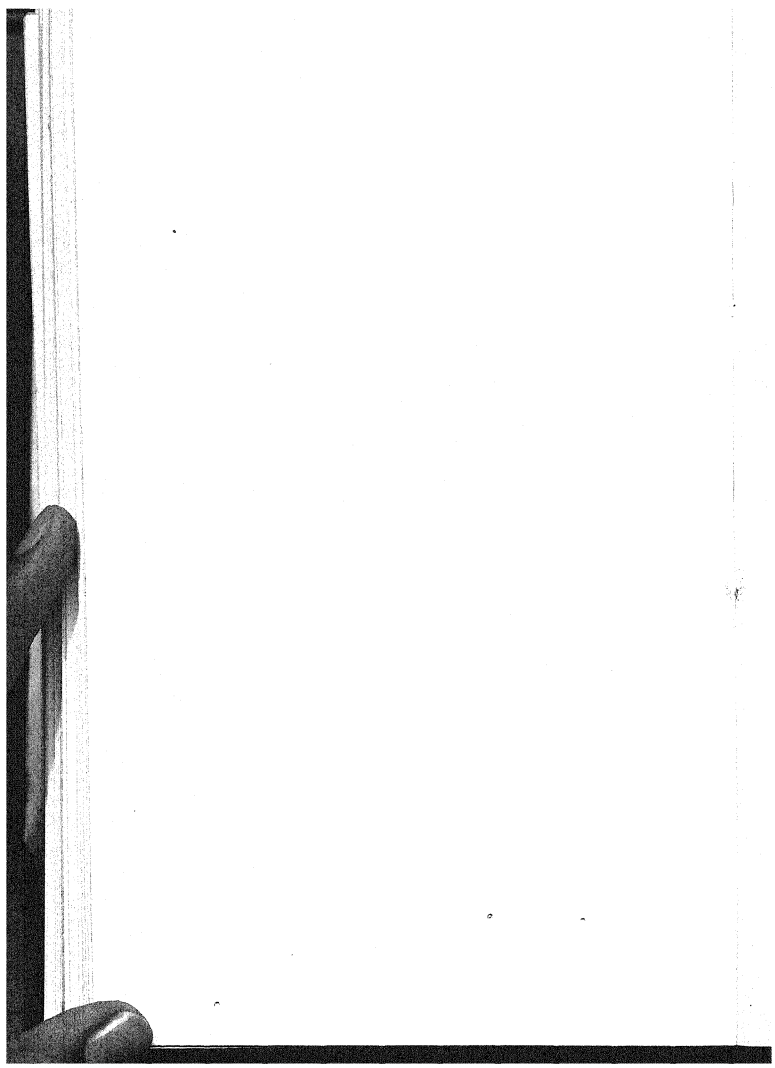




NORTH BORNEO VOLUNTEERS : Jesselton Company marching to Church Parade

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	£	s.	d.
The British Red Cross Society . . . . .	18,924	8	0
Queen Mary's Convalescent Auxiliary Hospitals . . . . .	1,507	12	0
St. Dunstan's . . . . .	1,329	12	0
Officers' Families Fund . . . . .	1,306	8	0
Prisoners of War . . . . .	1,298	0	0

Previously to the inauguration of this fund sums in excess of £3,000 had been collected by the Chamber of Commerce and other bodies, the bulk of which was remitted to the Prince of Wales' Fund. An 'Our Day' was held in 1916, 1917, and 1918, and the appeals and entertainments which were organized were generously supported by all members of the community. As Honorary Secretary and Treasurer, Mr. J. N. Wardrop rendered invaluable services, and it was to a great extent through his energy and devotion that such gratifying results were attained.

Enemy aliens, who only numbered 11, were interned in the interior and subsequently removed to Australia. The wireless stations in the State were placed at the disposal of the Royal Navy and proved of great service to them, while the harbour of Sandakan was utilized for a considerable period as a base for torpedo-boat destroyers. Censorship of mails and telegrams was undertaken by the Government staff in co-operation with the naval authorities.

Prior to the war, communication between North Borneo ports and Singapore was maintained exclusively by the Norddeutscher Lloyd, with four steamers. At the beginning of August 1914 these vessels without warning hurried to the shelter of neutral ports. How serious the position was may be gathered from the fact that North Borneo is dependent on Singapore not only for all European goods, but also for over 50 per cent. of the rice which is the staple food of the Asiatic population. Steps were at once taken by legislation to conserve all food-stuffs, and with the assistance of the Straits Settlements Government arrangements were made for the Straits Steamship Company to take over the North Borneo run. For a short time difficulties were experienced in financing the purchase of food-stuffs in Singapore owing to the disorganization of the banks on the outbreak of war, but when these were overcome it was not many days before the arrival of a vessel with a cargo of rice and other necessities relieved the position. As the war progressed, fewer and smaller steamers were allotted

to the North Borneo run, but thanks to the sympathetic attitude of the Admiral and the Government of the Straits Settlements, transport for all necessary food-stuffs and even other imports was assured.

The shortage of shipping mainly affected the exports, and throughout the war the country suffered practically not at all in the matter of imported foodstuffs. The first industry to feel the pinch was the export timber trade, which was restricted to shipments to Hong Kong by one small steamer. European consignments ceased, and the newly-started trade with India was entirely dropped. The restrictions imposed by the Netherlands Overseas Trust, combined with the shipping shortage, disorganized the tobacco industry, which was threatened with disaster by the difficulty in getting the crops to Europe. Large quantities of tobacco were held up in Borneo, and the efforts of planters were taxed to check the deterioration, which rapidly set in, owing to climatic conditions. Rubber and cutch<sup>1</sup> next felt the shipping shortage, but fortunately these products can be stored in the tropics without harm. Production was restricted, but every opportunity was taken to get small shipments away. The sago, damar,<sup>2</sup> and jungle produce industries dwindled to small dimensions owing to the fall in prices. The local market for these products is Singapore, which rapidly became overstocked owing to the impossibility of allotting space on homeward-bound steamers for any cargo not classified as necessary to the prosecution of the war. As a contrast to other industries, coal benefited by the general demand. Government assumed control of the output of the Silimpopon mines, producing some 60,000 tons per annum, and allotted it to men-of-war, British and Allied shipping, in accordance with the general policy outlined by the Naval Commander-in-Chief on the China station. Notwithstanding, however, the difficulties caused by the war, the export returns from 1915 onwards considerably exceeded in value those of pre-war years. This was largely due to the fact that various rubber estates came into bearing during the war, with the result of a notable increase in the export of rubber.

The Civil Service in Borneo comprised approximately 85

<sup>1</sup> Cutch is a product of the bark of the mangrove tree, used in tanning, dyeing, and fishing industries.

<sup>2</sup> Damar is a resin or gum which enters largely into the composition of varnish.

European officers. On the outbreak of war permission was given to as many young officers as could be spared to join the forces. As in other Civil Services, permission was necessarily refused to many applicants and several resignations resulted. The position at the end of 1917 is recorded as follows in the Governor's administration report :

‘ Of 84 European Officers whose names appear in the Civil Service List issued in January 1917, twenty one were absent at the end of the year. Eleven were serving with the Forces, four were on leave in England, five had resigned, and one was on sick leave in Hongkong. The loyalty with which the Service as a whole has faced the position, and the readiness with which additional burdens of work have been accepted, while prospects of leave to England receded, are features of the year which are recorded with appreciation.’

Apart from the European staff a call for volunteers from the Railway Department for service in Mesopotamia received a ready response, and one of these men laid down his life. His Majesty recognized North Borneo's war effort by awarding the C.M.G. to the Governor, Mr. A. C. Pearson, and the Secretary of State by a letter acknowledging with appreciation the services rendered by the Government staff and the community.

It may be surmised that North Borneo was one of the last parts of the Empire to feel the economic pinch of the war. The Asiatic population depends but little on European products, and the Europeans until the end of hostilities cannot be said to have suffered from a shortage of the ordinary necessities and comforts of life. It was probably due to this absence of hardships that the population remained peaceful, with the exception of two unimportant tribal risings. Attempts were made (and frustrated) to tamper with the loyalty of the Indian Constabulary. The primitive ignorance of most native tribes, and the lack of interest exhibited by Chinese of the labouring classes, made their control easy and systematic propaganda unnecessary. It was not until the Armistice had been signed that the consequences of the war, in the shape of rising prices, scarcity of necessary materials, and, above all, a rice famine, began to leave deep marks on the life of the country.

## SECTION IV

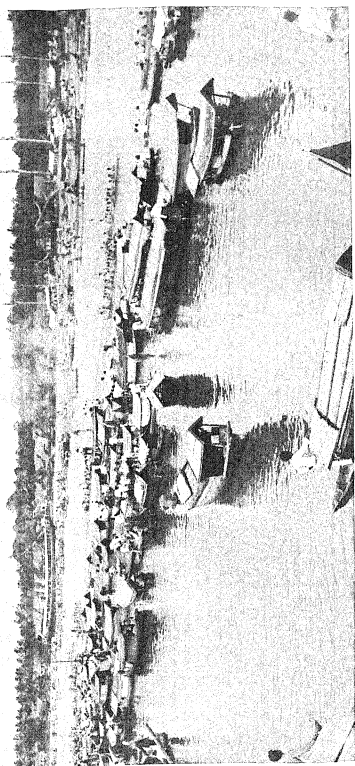
### SARAWAK<sup>1</sup>

AK on the west coast of Borneo has an area somewhat  
ian England, and an estimated population of approxi-  
00,000 including 50,000 Chinese. It is an independent  
ler the protection of Great Britain, and its present  
L.H. Rajah Charles Vyner Brooke, who is advised by  
ne Council containing both European and native

The capital and chief port is Kuching, the wireless  
which was, when the war came, placed at the disposal  
yal Navy.

a total European population in the territory of about  
65 men took active service in His Majesty's forces  
e war, several of whom were killed or died on active  
hile various distinctions were gained. Those who  
ere for the most part either members of the State  
ent service or in the employ of one or other of the  
ng companies which operate in Sarawak, viz. the  
ompany and the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum—now the  
Oilfields Company. During the war the Borneo  
supplied to Great Britain and the Allies a large  
Sarawak products ranging from gold and antimony  
sago, and pepper, while through the Anglo-Saxon  
Company from the large petroleum field in the  
ot no less than 265,000 tons of liquid fuel were  
o the British and Allied navies. When the original  
is oilfield was made in 1909, it was stipulated that  
of not less than 10,000 tons of liquid fuel should  
kept in storage for supply, if necessary, to the  
y, and the patriotic wisdom of this provision was  
ed at the time of the war. In addition to petroleum  
upply of coal from the Sarawak mines to Singapore  
ined throughout the war. From the funds of the  
Rajah contributed to the British Government on  
the war £5,000 p.a. for six years to be used at  
War charities were supported by all classes of the

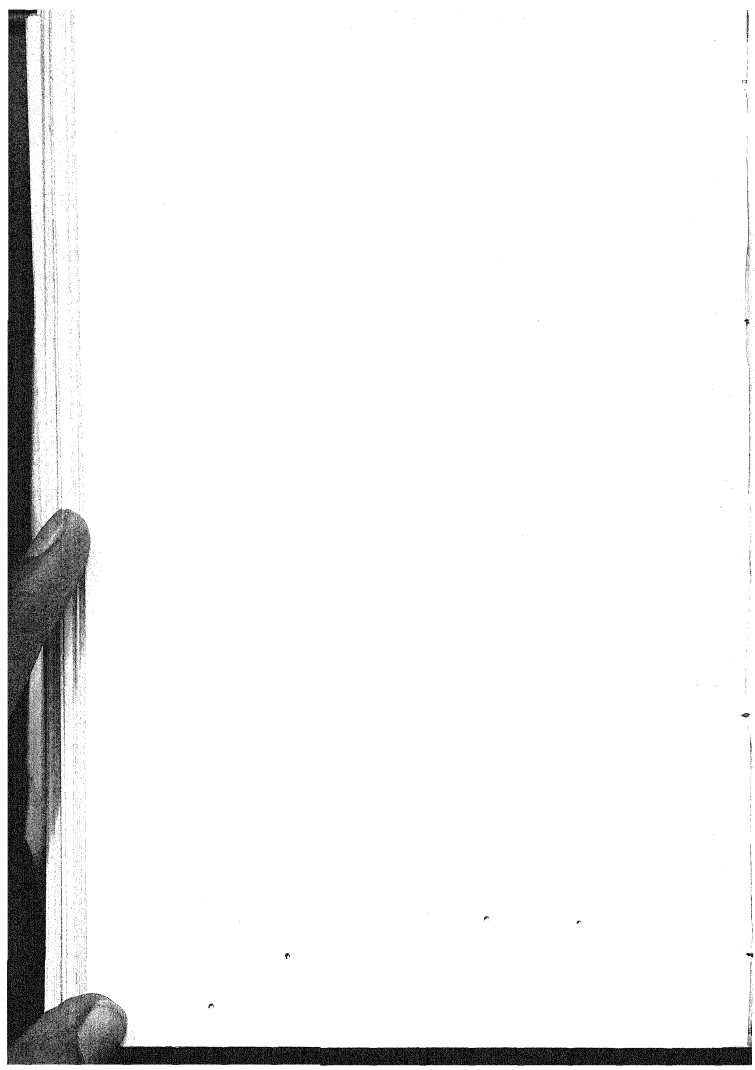
<sup>1</sup> has been condensed from material kindly supplied by Dr. Charles  
of the Sarawak Advisory Council in England.



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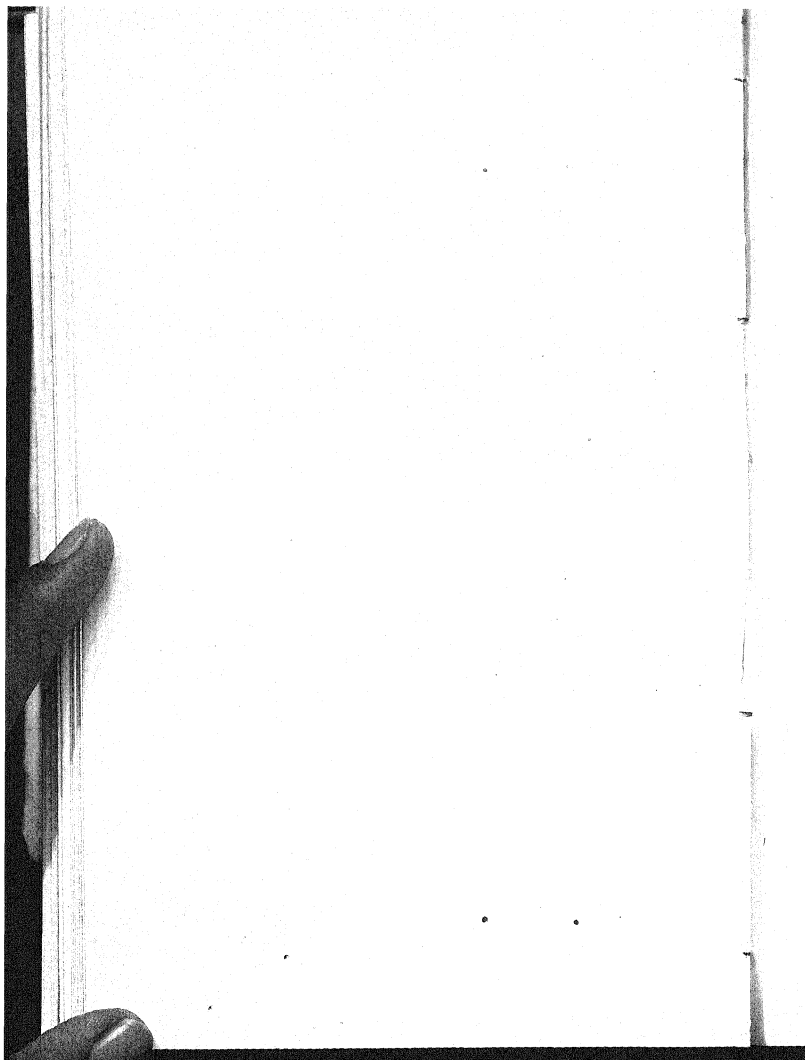
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population, not only by Europeans, Chinese, and Malays, but also by the natives of the interior. As far as details are available, the chief recipients were the Prince of Wales' National Relief Fund—to which among other contributors the staff of the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company contributed 5 per cent of their salaries during the war—and the British Red Cross. Substantial contributions were also made to the Blue Cross fund for horses, of which fund H.H. Rancee Margaret of Sarawak was a Vice-President. Direct remittances to England were supplemented by subscriptions to organizations for war charities at Singapore and in Canada. There were no enemy aliens in Sarawak to be interned on the outbreak of war. The coast was patrolled from time to time by British warships, and all mails coming into the State were subjected to Government censorship. The mail boats belonging to the Sarawak and Singapore Steamship Company continued to run regularly between Singapore and Kuching, and smaller ships plied occasionally between the ports, but some tank vessels carrying part cargoes of petroleum from Sarawak were sunk, and the great reduction in cargo vessels sailing from Singapore seriously affected the shipment of Sarawak products to Europe. Cargo space was only available to a very limited extent, and as a result stocks of gutta percha, sago, pepper and other articles accumulated. Owing to the limitation of shipping of cargo from Singapore, the service between Singapore and Kuching was towards the end of the war cut down from a weekly to a ten days' service. There was difficulty with regard to European officers' passages to England, and in some cases the journey was made via Australia. The Rajah's own yacht was lent to the Government of India.

It was found necessary to take steps to control the prices of food stuffs such as milk, rice, and flour, but any serious shortage was avoided by the friendly action of the Straits Settlements Government in arranging to send regular cargoes of food from Singapore; and Chinese and other natives who were thrown out of work by the shortage of cargo space were assisted by the Sarawak Government to find other employment. The needs of the inhabitants of Sarawak are not great, the demand for imported food was relatively small, and it may be summed up that while the war caused temporary inconvenience to Sarawak it did not inflict serious suffering on its people.



PART VII  
CHINA

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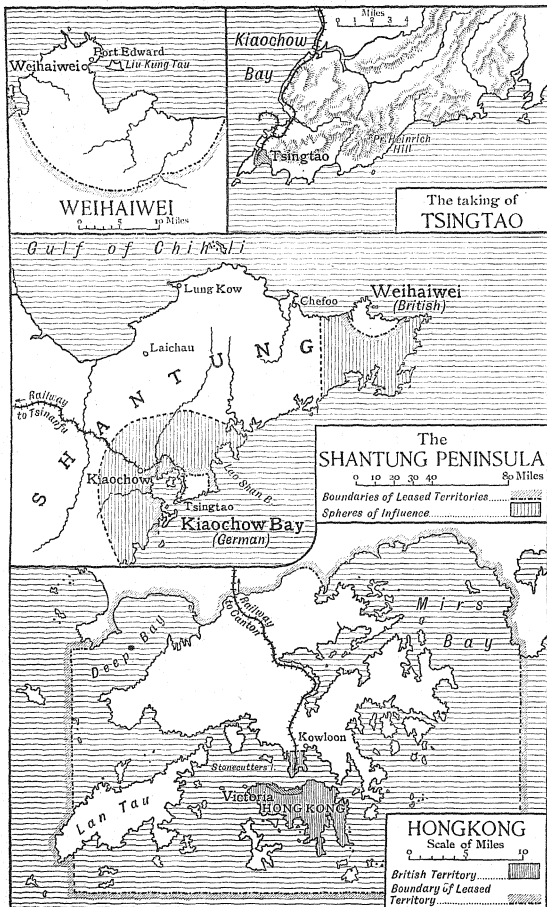
## SECTION I

### THE TAKING OF TSINGTAO

IN 1914 Great Britain had two footholds in China, one in the south, the other in the north; in the south the colony of Hong Kong, with a leased area attached to it; in the north the leased territory of Wei-hai-Wei. They were very characteristic holdings of a sea-power, consisting, in either case, of an island with a mainland strip opposite, which enclosed fine natural harbours, one at the mouth of the Canton river, the waterway to the chief city of southern China; the other near the entrance to the Gulf of Pechili, which is the sea frontage to Peking. South of Wei-hai-Wei, but in the same province of Shantung, the Germans were in evidence in their leased territory of Kiaochow, but with the fall of their chief settlement and fortress, Tsingtao, in November 1914, the direct presence of war passed away from the China seas, amply safeguarded by the fleet and armies of Japan. Thenceforward, apart from German intrigues in China, hardly any part of the world was so secure during the war as the Far East.

The capture of Tsingtao and the expulsion of the Germans from Kiaochow was the work of Japan, but British ships, the battleship *Triumph* with one or two destroyers, supported the Japanese fleet on sea, and a small British contingent co-operated with the Japanese army on land.

On the southern or south-western side of the Shantung Peninsula, Wei-hai-Wei being at its north-eastern end, is the bay of Kiaochow, the entrance of which is from 2 to 2½ miles wide. On the eastern side of the entrance is Tsingtao. It is near the point of a peninsula which, except at this extreme end, is squat and broad, with little of the peninsular form. A railway ran out northwards from the town along the eastern side of the bay, and circling round its head was carried in a westerly direction to Tsinanfu, the capital of the Shantung province, over 250 miles distant from Tsingtao. The territory actually leased to Germany was about 200 square miles in area, and outside the leased territory was a so-called neutral



zone, a sphere of German influence of some 2,500 square miles. It was much the same with the British at Wei-hai-Wei. Acting in concert with the British Government, the Japanese on the 15th of August 1914 gave the Germans notice to quit, the time fixed by the ultimatum expired on the 23rd of August, and on the 27th a Japanese squadron under Admiral Kato declared a blockade of German territory, occupied two small islands near the entrance of Kiaochow Bay, and began sweeping up the mines which the Germans had laid. A few days later, on the 2nd of September, the first Japanese troops landed at a small port on the northern side of the Shantung peninsula, round about 100 miles distant from Tsingtao.<sup>1</sup> In English accounts it is given the name of Lung Kow, in Japanese that of Ryuhkau. It was far outside German territory, and the landing of Japanese forces called forth a formal protest from the Chinese Government. The Japanese vanguard pushed south as fast as the state of the country in abnormally rainy weather permitted, and by the middle of the month they cut the railway at the head of Kiaochow Bay and occupied the Chinese town and railway station of Kiaochow, west of the bay and 4 or 5 miles inland. The Germans were thus isolated on land and blockaded at sea.

At about the same date, beginning on the 18th of September, the main Expeditionary Force of Japan was landed at a very different point from Lung Kow, at Lao Shan Bay, not in the leased territory but within the German sphere of influence, north-east of the main fortifications of Tsingtao and on the eastern flank of the advanced German lines. The bay in Japanese accounts is styled Rozan Bay.

Tsingtao in German hands had grown from a small fishing village into a town of 60,000 inhabitants. It was very strongly fortified, with all the latest modern appliances. Money had not been spared, nor Chinese labour nor German forethought and military skill. The main defences of the town consisted of a line of infantry redoubts extending across the peninsula where it is  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles wide, with wire entanglements, concrete shelters, fortified machine-gun nests and the like, while

<sup>1</sup> One account makes the distance 150 miles, another 80. There are the most extraordinary divergences in the details of the various accounts of the Tsingtao campaign, and it seems impossible to get more than a general outline of what took place.

on the hills behind, most carefully disposed, were batteries of heavy guns, commanding land and sea. The surface of the land in front of Tsingtao was very broken. There was a succession of hills or lines of hills and valleys with small streams and watercourses running roughly across the peninsula. It was a good country for defence purposes, especially in wet weather, when the streams became appreciable obstacles and mud checked advance. Weather was a more formidable adversary to the Japanese than the actual Germans opposed to them, and it was especially bad at the very outset of the operations and in the last stages of the investment.

In addition to the main permanent defences of Tsingtao the Germans had at varying distances advanced lines of defence. There seem to have been in particular two such lines, sited 3 and 9 miles respectively, in front of the permanent fortifications or—say—6 miles and 12 miles respectively distant from the town itself, and at points where the width of the peninsula was about  $7\frac{1}{2}$  miles in the one case and 11 in the other. At a little distance inland from the main fortifications and on their eastern side was a hill, somewhat higher than the average, Prinz Heinrich Hill, which formed a strong natural outpost.

Tsingtao was in charge of the German Admiralty, and its commandant, Captain Meyer Waldeck, was a sailor. The normal garrison had, when war became assured, been supplemented by German reservists from all parts of China and by small detachments of Regulars from Tientsin and the Legation at Peking. It may be estimated that the defenders of Tsingtao, exclusive of civilians and Chinese, numbered about 5,000.<sup>1</sup> They were amply supplied with guns and machine guns and supported by ships in the harbour, including an Austrian cruiser, the *Kaiserin Elisabeth*, two or three old gunboats, a torpedo boat and a destroyer. The guns of these ships worried the right flank of the Japanese advance. In the air the Germans were at a disadvantage; they appear to have had only one fighting aeroplane, which, however, was handled with great courage and skill.

The Japanese land forces, whose commander-in-chief was Lieutenant-General Kamio, numbered apparently round about

<sup>1</sup> A German account has given the number, excluding civilians and Chinese, as 144 officers and 3,600 other ranks, but the record of prisoners and casualties shows that these figures are too low.



30,000, composed almost entirely of infantry and field artillery. In the air the Japanese planes did excellent work. The British contingent, under Brigadier-General Barnardiston, consisted of the 2nd battalion of the South Wales Borderers, rather over 900 strong, supplemented late in the day by half a battalion, 450 men, of the 36th Sikhs. As has been said, the weather was all against the invaders, heavy rains delayed the start, held up the transport, and greatly added to the difficulties of carrying forward the lines of investment.

Owing to the rains the main Japanese Army did not move inland from Lao Shan Bay till the beginning of the last week in September, but between the 26th and 29th, attacking from both north and east, they dislodged the Germans from their advanced lines and drove them back down the peninsula into their main positions.

Barnardiston and the South Wales Borderers had embarked at Tientsin on the 19th of September and reached Wei-hai-wei on the following day. Here a base hospital had been established, and a hospital ship and a supply of mules for transport joined the expedition. They disembarked at Lao Shan Bay on the 23rd of September; on the 26th they moved inland, following the Japanese Army as well as the weather and the state of the roads permitted, and before the end of the month joined hands with them, but not in time to take part in the first fighting. The Sikhs did not come up to the fighting line till a month later, the 28th of October.

In October the regular investment of the fortress began. Time was needed by the Japanese to bring up their heavy siege guns, but the besiegers' lines went methodically forward, stretching, like the defenders', right across the peninsula. On the 13th of October non-combatants were allowed to leave Tsingtao—a sure sign that the main attack was imminent, and shortly afterwards the German position was greatly weakened by the loss of Prinz Heinrich Hill, of which the Japanese under cover of darkness gained possession more easily than had been anticipated, and from which their artillery could command the defences of Tsingtao. Sapping went on, and the besiegers drew steadily nearer to their goal, the British troops being charged with a front of about 600 yards in the right centre of the line. The last stage began on the last day of October with a heavy bombardment from land and sea, the Japanese guns

being many in number, of heavy calibre, and served with admirable accuracy. Under cover of the fire the trenches were moved on towards the infantry positions, the immediate approach to which was across sodden and exposed ground. After steadily advancing their trenches and parallels, the Japanese on the night of the 6th/7th of November carried a German fort on the western flank of the defences, and a few hours later, on the morning of the 7th, when a general assault had been ordered and was about to begin, the Germans hoisted the white flag and surrendered, the formal occupation of the town taking place on the 10th.

They had made but a second-rate fight. Their apology was that they were short of ammunition, but there is reason to doubt whether this was a true account, and they would probably have succumbed earlier if they had not been helped by the weather. There was nothing striking about the siege. The Japanese had taken full measure of their task, and carried it through by sound military methods which they had learned from the Germans; the small British force took the place assigned to it in the front line and did its work according to plan. The Japanese casualties were close on 2,000, the British 73. The German casualties, apart from prisoners of war, were under 1,000, the prisoners of war exceeded 4,000. The net result was that a fairly low price was paid for evicting Germany from the China seas.

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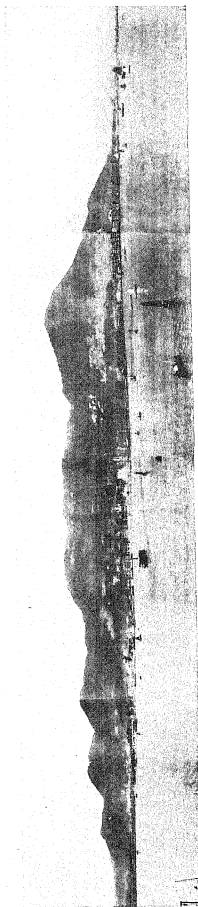
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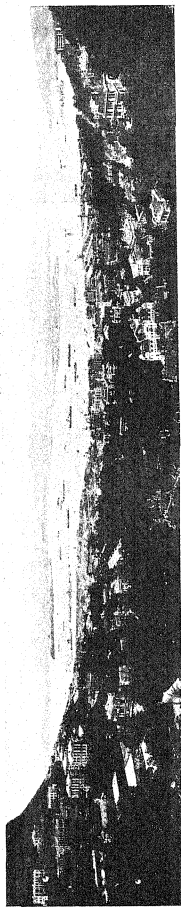
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HONG-KONG FROM THE HARBOUR



HONG-KONG HARBOUR AND KOWLOON FROM THE PEAK

## SECTION II

### HONG KONG

THE Colony of Hong Kong consists of the island of that name, larger than Guernsey, smaller than Jersey, with one or two adjoining islets, of the Kowloon Peninsula immediately opposite the island barely three square miles in area, and of a much larger leased territory behind. The island became a British possession in 1841, the Kowloon Peninsula in 1860, while the Kowloon hinterland was leased from China for 99 years in 1898. The whole area is about 400 square miles, of which nearly 360 square miles are held on lease. It is on the eastern side of the estuary of the Canton river, and Kowloon is linked by railway to Canton. The total population when the war came was not far short of half a million, far over 1,000 to the square mile, about half being crowded into the city of Victoria on the island fronting the spacious landlocked harbour, among the finest in the world and the busiest in trade. The white element in the population has varied from 5,000 to 10,000, a large proportion being Portuguese. The immense influx of Chinese into the island after it passed into British keeping bore evidence to the confidence inspired by British rule and justice. Except in the matter of alcohol and tobacco, import duties on tobacco having been imposed during the war, Hong Kong is a free port, in volume of shipping with few rivals in any sea. It is a Colony of the ordinary non-self-governing type, with Governor, Executive, and Legislative Councils, the unofficial members of the Legislative Council representing different interests and including spokesmen of the Chinese community. When the war came the Governor was the late Sir Henry May, G.C.M.G., whose whole official career, except for rather over a year in the government of Fiji, had been passed in Hong Kong, and whose term of government outlasted the war, though he left for Canada, having been summoned there by telegraph owing to the dangerous illness of his daughter, shortly before the Armistice, in September 1918, and subsequently resigned on grounds of ill health. Hong Kong was and is an Imperial

Naval Station, fortified and garrisoned, with a strong body of police and a small force of volunteers. In 1914 the Colony was rich and prosperous in a high degree.

Victoria is a very cosmopolitan city, attracting merchants and seafarers from all lands.<sup>1</sup> On the outbreak of war one of the first steps taken was to establish a cable and postal censorship, and the censors were confronted with as many as 24 distinct European and Asiatic languages. No difficulty however was experienced in finding interpreters and translators, and Sir Charles Eliot, at the time head of the University of Hong Kong, and subsequently British ambassador in Japan, gave much assistance to the work. There was a considerable German element in the community, about 100 German merchants and their employees with an equal number of women and children. In accordance with instructions from home, enemy reservists found in the Colony were arrested and detained as prisoners of war in a camp on Stonecutters island, a fortified islet north-west of the harbour. There were no first reservists among the German residents, but a number were arrested on board the ships that came into the port during the early days of the war, and the residents included some 20 second reservists, the remainder being exempt from military service owing to the nature of their employment or their age. The latter were at first provisionally allowed to remain on parole, with restriction of movement in the Colony and on an undertaking not to leave it, but soon the necessity for preventing any leakage of information as to the movements of British merchant ships entailed the internment or deportation of the entire German community, a few heads of firms who were over military age being deported under parole. The internment took place at the end of October 1914 at a camp at Kowloon, to which the prisoners of war from Stonecutters Island were also transferred, and early in 1916 all the inmates of the camp were shipped to Australia. No turmoil or breach of the peace was caused by the presence of the German element in the Colony. From the first, we are told in the Annual Report for 1914, 'the entire community showed a commendable spirit'. Wild rumours were, it is true, at first disseminated among the Chinese population, with the result that between

<sup>1</sup> The material for this account was mainly supplied by the Government of Hong Kong.

40,000 and 50,000 Chinese, for the most part women and children, fled to the neighbouring province of China, but in no long time they were reassured and returned, and meanwhile the Chinese residents in the Colony as a whole were conspicuous in public spirit, at once offering to enrol those of their members who were British subjects as volunteers or Special Constables, and to subscribe to war funds. The freedom of the port was necessarily restricted on the outbreak of war, and soon after hostilities began a system of issuing permits for all imports and exports was instituted, with the object of controlling the movement of prohibited goods and preventing trade with the enemy. This system was maintained until the end.

With the coming of war the Volunteer Force was mobilized and the members of the Volunteer Reserve Forces were enrolled in it. As soon as war became imminent practically the entire British male community offered their services for the Volunteer Reserves. Before the rumours of war the Volunteers numbered 339, and the Volunteer Reserves 181, but before the war was a week old the numbers of the Volunteers had risen to 393 and of the Reserves to 318. Owing to the impossibility of enrolling, arming, equipping, and training more men, many candidates were refused admittance to either corps and were utilized as Special Constables, to replace police seconded for military service. Nearly 200 Indian and Chinese police were, when the war began, lent by the Colonial Government to the military authorities for various subsidiary military duties, their places being filled as far as possible by Special Constables. When, in a few weeks' time, the police returned to their civil duties, those of the Special Constables who were ineligible for the ranks of the Volunteer Forces, or who desired to remain with the Police Department, were, with a number of Indians, Chinese, and Portuguese, being British subjects, enrolled under a special ordinance passed on the 22nd of October 1914 into a force called the Special Police Reserve. The commandant was a local barrister, Mr. F. C. Jenkin, C.B.E., acting under the control of the Captain Superintendent of police. This force soon numbered 250 men, composed of 52 Europeans, 24 Indians, 98 of Portuguese descent, and 76 Chinese. In a short time the numbers rose to over 500 and eventually to over 600. Four companies were formed, one a European and Indian company, one Portuguese, and two Chinese. There was a maxim-gun

section, a motor-bicycle section, a mounted section, and a Chinese ambulance corps. The efficient help given by this useful body of men to the regular police enabled 69 of the European police to be relieved for duty with the British Army in France. Under an amending ordinance, passed in 1917, the title of the force was changed to that of Hong Kong Police Reserve.

In August 1917 a military service ordinance was passed, under which all male British subjects in the Colony between the ages of 18 and 55, who were not specially exempted, were rendered liable to military service within the Colony. Under this ordinance a Hong Kong Defence Force was established, which included the Volunteer Corps and the Volunteer Reserve but not the Special Police Reserve, and which consisted of a company of artillery, a company of engineers, and a battalion of infantry, the command being given to Major H. A. Morgan of the Indian Army. Thus the whole Colony, so far as British subjects were concerned, was organized for home defence, and the boys were represented by Hong Kong volunteer cadets and the boy scouts of St. Joseph's College.

Meanwhile there had been an exodus of young Britons to serve at the front, and the Colonial Government had found money to pay the passages of recruits for the British Army, not only from the Colony itself but also from other places in the Far East. The annual reports tell us that up to the end of 1914 seven local residents of the Colony left to take commissions as officers and 37 to enlist in the ranks, while from outside the Colony two went to take commissions and 10 to enlist, and that by the end of 1915, 135 had left Hong Kong to join up in England of whom 62 had been members of the Volunteer Corps. Among the younger men of the European community who remained behind there was growing discontent as the war went on. It was felt that in many instances they could be spared by their employers for service in the field. Accordingly, early in 1917, a commission, the Chairman of which was Mr. E. H. Sharp, K.C., was appointed to inquire 'whether and to what extent, having regard both to Imperial needs and to local conditions, it is practicable and expedient that male British subjects of military age, resident in the Colony, should be allowed to leave' for service with His Majesty's armies. After sitting for two months the commis-



sion recommended the release of 43 men, their inquiries having already indirectly resulted in the release of some 34 more. They reported that there were still men in the Colony who could well be spared, and they recommended the introduction of compulsory service with the British armies in the field. This recommendation, though endorsed by the Governor, was not at the time sanctioned by the Home Government. In April 1918 there was renewed dissatisfaction on the part of some of the younger men in the Colony at the difficulties which they experienced in obtaining release from their employers to go to the front; the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce recommended that 'some form of compulsory military service beyond the confines of the Colony' should be adopted, subject to safeguarding 'essential economic trades'. The Governor supported the recommendation, it received the approval of the Secretary of State with the proviso that only men of pure British descent should be taken, and in June 1918 a General Military Service Ordinance was passed 'to provide for the raising of a force the members of which shall be liable to service with His Majesty's forces outside the Colony during the present war'. The terms of the ordinance applied, with specified exceptions, to all male British subjects ordinarily resident in the Colony and between the ages of 18 and 40. The cases of those who were not servants of the Government were to come before a General Military Service Tribunal, in the composition of which there was to be a substantial commercial majority; and in the case of appeals from this tribunal, as was allowed by the law, to the Governor in Council, three assessors might be appointed to assist in the hearing, two of whom were to be commercial men. Ample provision was thus made to safeguard merchant employers' interests. Those who were not exempted and were found medically fit were to be enrolled in the 'General Military Service Force of Hong Kong'. The services of Mr. Sharp were again secured for the Chairmanship of the tribunal, and in his absence the Chief Justice of Hong Kong, Sir William Rees Davies, acted as Chairman. The prospect of this law being passed led to 38 men being released for overseas service, and the direct result of the law when passed was the release of 51 men. The proceedings of the tribunal were, on instruction from home, suspended on the 22nd of November 1918, after the signing

of the Armistice, but the ordinance, together with the ordinance of 1917, continued in force until December 1919, when they were both repealed. Prior to the law the number of men resident in Hong Kong who left the Colony to join His Majesty's forces was 463, and the number of non-residents 78. Of the 51 men who were released by the tribunal, 12 were allowed to go overseas to join the armies, and the remainder were allotted to various war services by the Government or, after enrolment, by the military authorities, who sent the majority to the 6th Training Battalion at Kirkee in India. As far as is known, 75 men from Hong Kong died on active service, and the distinctions won included 1 D.S.O., 4 M.C.s, and 4 M.M.'s.

Mention should be made of an Imperial unit specially connected with Hong Kong, the Hong Kong and Singapore Mountain Battery, which served in the war in Sinai and Palestine. An account of this battery is given in the Appendix.

Bearing in mind the cosmopolitan character of the population of Hong Kong and that it was in a unique degree a trading community, carrying on its life under abnormal difficulties and restrictions required by the war, the laws passed and the steps taken, not only to provide for home defence and internal security in such manner as to release regular soldiers and European police for service at the front, but also to send to the front every suitable and able-bodied civilian who could possibly be spared, deserve every acknowledgement. No less noteworthy were the money contributions made by the Colony as a unit of the Empire in aid of the expenditure of the war, and the subscriptions by the citizens of the Colony in money or kind to war charities.

In 1916 an ordinance was passed to raise a war loan up to the amount of \$3 millions by the issue of bonds in the Colony. The sum thus raised was to be 'placed at the disposal of His Majesty's Government for the prosecution of the present war'. In the following year, 1917, another ordinance was passed 'to provide for a temporary increase in the rates for the special purpose of increasing the contributions of the Colony to His Majesty's Government towards the expenses of the present war'. This special war rate amounted to 7 per cent., and it was levied for two years from the 1st of July 1917. From the money accruing under these two laws and from surplus revenues the Colony handed over in all to the Imperial Government,

as a free contribution in aid of war expenditure, a sum of over \$10½ millions, equivalent in sterling to over £1,653,000. Over and above this sum, and over and above also the cost of the Hong Kong Defence Force, amounting to \$539,000, some part of which expense would no doubt have been incurred in peace time, the war expenditure of the Hong Kong Government amounted to \$1,854,292 under the following heads :

	\$
Maintenance of Prisoners of War and Families . . .	497,272-67
Transport of Prisoners of War and Families . . .	192,504-42
Cable Censorship . . . . .	189,554-17
Postal Censorship . . . . .	66,741-55
Transport of Recruits to England . . . . .	75,025-74
Transport (return passage from England) . . . . .	935-73
Allowance to Civil Officers at Front . . . . .	262,686-59
Police Extra Duties . . . . .	15,562-57
Miscellaneous . . . . .	85,449-34
Expenses under Ordinance 9 of 1918 . . . . .	17,599-50
Special Expenditure of Imports and Exports Dept. . . . .	9,481-56
Special Expenditure of Pass Office, Police Dept. . . . .	847-22
Expenses of War Propaganda Committee . . . . .	60,568-84
Expenses of Custodian of Enemy Property . . . . .	8,660-68
Armistice Celebration—Decorations and Illuminations . . . . .	4,664-26
Special War Allowance to Civil Servants . . . . .	366,737-19
Total . . . . .	1,854,292-03

There was no doubt that the various war charities would be well supported by a community at once wealthy and open-handed. Before the end of 1914, £17,000 had been sent to the Prince of Wales' National Relief Fund, and the total contributed to that fund, which was closed at the end of 1915, was over £41,000. Much money was subscribed up to the end of 1915, but no one central organization was in existence to deal with all the various war charities until in the latter part of that year a War Charities Fund Committee was constituted for the purpose. The accounts of that committee show that for the three years 1916-18 total subscriptions of \$1,419,000 (over £200,000) passed through their hands, of which over £176,000 were remitted to London. Almost every conceivable charity benefited, however remotely connected with the war. Among the beneficiaries the Red Cross headed the list with nearly £55,000, the Central Prisoners of War Committee received £18,000, the Blinded Soldiers and Sailors nearly £15,000, King George's Fund for Sailors £11,000. The allies were not forgotten, nearly £7,000 being sent to the French

Red Cross, and, from London to Vladivostok, Hong Kong money helped relief. 'Our Days' were plentiful in number, fruitful in results, and £10,000 subscribed on St. Andrew's Day 1918 testified to the strength of the Scottish element in this Far Eastern Colony. Various ladies' Associations did excellent work, the Hong Kong Association of War Workers, Queen Mary's Needlework Guild, and others, and 105,000 items, garments of different kinds, surgical dressings and the like were forwarded by a War Charities Store Sub-committee. Large gifts of tobacco and cigars came from tobacco companies, and Lady Roberts' Field-Glass Fund received strong support in kind.

It would perhaps be invidious to single out for special mention the names of individuals among the ladies of Hong Kong other than that of Lady May, for their work in connexion with the war. As President of the Queen Mary's Needlework Guild and Commandant of the V.A.D.s as well as in other directions, Lady May gave a lead, which was well followed up. Many ladies undertook work which set free men for service with the forces, and others devoted time and energy to war charities such as the supply of comforts for the troops and the raising of funds for the Red Cross Society. For such work Mrs. E. Stabb (now Lady Stabb) and Mrs. A. D. Hickling were awarded the M.B.E.

The investment in war loans by companies and individuals in the Colony amounted to £6,690,000, of which £177,000 were invested in United States War Loans. An appreciable proportion of the money thus invested was through the agency of the Hong Kong and South China War Savings Association.

Among the war efforts of Hong Kong not the least valuable was propaganda work, to counteract the activities of German agents in China and to enlighten the Chinese as to German methods in the prosecution of the war. Only late in the day did the Home Government fully appreciate the extent to which the allied cause suffered in neutral countries from skilfully composed and widely diffused enemy misrepresentations and set itself through the Ministry of Information to overtake and remedy the mischief. In May 1917 the Governor of Hong Kong appointed a Propaganda Committee consisting of the superintendents or managers of three great companies, of the Chinese Secretary of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce,

and of the Postmaster General of the Colony, Mr. S. E. C. Ross. This committee undertook the distribution of a paper called the *Cheng Pao*, which was printed in Chinese and published fortnightly in London, and a non-illustrated supplement to which was printed at Shanghai. No definitive instructions were given as to the methods to be adopted in circulating the paper, 75,000 copies of each issue of which were received, or as to communication with other similar committees. The Hong Kong Committee had no control over the contents of the paper, nor was their opinion invited as to its utility for the object in view. They were merely a channel of distributing, and soon came to the opinion that what was being done was not enough. Accordingly in November 1917, after a visit to Hong Kong by Mr. E. Coleman, a second committee was appointed, of which Mr. Montague Ede was Chairman and Mr. Ross Secretary. This committee was charged with propaganda in general, collaboration with a similar committee at Shanghai was arranged, and active propaganda work went forward. It was decided that systematic instruction as to German atrocities should be given in all schools, and a small book of *War Stories*, written by Mr. B. James of the Education Department, was published. It had much success, some 5,000 copies were distributed, it found its way to the most remote parts of China, and some of the stories were adopted by the Director of Education in the Philippines in his appeal to schools to contribute to the fourth Liberty Loan. Story tellers were engaged and trained to illuminate the Chinese as to German proceedings. Ten were in regular employment with an aggregate monthly audience of about 30,000 hearers, the work being largely done on the steamers plying between Hong Kong and the neighbouring ports of Canton, Macao, and Kong Moon. A cinema tour was also attempted but without success, owing to the disturbed state of the country at the time and the flooding of the West river. On the 1st of October 1917 a paper called the *Daily Bulletin* was published by the committee containing full telegraphic news, and including many telegrams which did not appear in the other newspapers of the Colony. The news contained in the *Bulletin* was translated daily into Chinese by a translation bureau maintained by the committee, and an arrangement was made with the vernacular papers of Hong Kong and with 16 papers in Canton, whereby

those papers, in return for a free telegraphic service, undertook to publish unaltered all that was sent to them by the committee for publication. Every month the Hong Kong Committee distributed through the Hong Kong Post Office 70,000 copies of papers free of charge for the Shanghai Committee, an arrangement being made whereby all matter connected with allied propaganda, if posted in the Hong Kong Post Office, was posted free through the Chinese posts, and the work of the year 1918 resulted in the delivery in Hong Kong of over a million papers in addition to pamphlets, and the posting in Hong Kong on behalf of Shanghai of over 600,000 papers in addition to pamphlets. A series of articles on the war written by Mr. Frederick Coleman and procured for the committee by the Ministry of Information were translated into Chinese and circulated to the vernacular papers of Hong Kong and Canton. The Propaganda Committee continued its work actively in 1919 until the Peace of Versailles put an end to the war.

Hong Kong was one of the colonies, mainly Naval and Military stations, for which, in view of any grave crisis arising at a future time, an Order in Council had been passed on the 26th of October 1896. During the war some other colonies than those to which the Order was originally applicable were included within its scope, and its contents were enlarged by an Amending Order in Council of 21st March 1916. When proclaimed in a colony, as it was proclaimed in Hong Kong on the 5th of August 1914, the day after the outbreak of war, it gave to the Governor very wide emergency powers similar to those exercised by military authorities under martial law. Under it a large number of regulations were made in the course of the war, dealing with the subjects of alien seamen, ship-building, and ship repairing, discipline in Admiralty transports, censorship and the control of the port, with fixing of maximum prices and various other matters. At the same time a great many ordinances, passed in the normal way by the Legislative Council of the Colony, were called forth by the war. Such legislation, as elsewhere, closely followed the lines of war legislation in the United Kingdom, except so far as local conditions required modified or additional legislation. The local conditions of Hong Kong were very special. It was an open port, and the absence of any special customs organization

necessitated ordinances bringing all imports and exports under a system of permits and licences to which reference has already been made. The community contained the most diverse elements, and it was necessary to legislate for the purpose of obtaining a register of all non-Chinese adults resident in the Colony. There were some seven or eight trading with the enemy ordinances, and the last, passed in 1918 after the Armistice, cancelled the corporation of the Berlin Ladies Mission and the Basel Missionary Society, and vested their property in the Custodian of Enemy Property—a product of the war. Not in Hong Kong alone, but in other British colonies also, notably on the Gold Coast, had the Basel Mission, admirable in peace time for educational and industrial training, combined its mission work with political propaganda against Great Britain and her allies. In 1919, too, an ordinance was passed by which for three years after the end of the war no former alien enemy was allowed in the Colony without a permit.

Four Alien Enemies (winding up) Ordinances testified to the difficulty of the problem how to deal with the numerous German firms established in the Colony, as they testified also to the extent to which Germans had taken advantage of British open ports in the Far East. The case of the Deutsche Asiatische Bank stood by itself, and its liquidation began in August 1914. Of the other German businesses many were branches or agencies of firms which had their head offices or their ultimate control in enemy territory, and most of them had partners and offices in enemy territory. A very substantial part of the import trade of the Colony, and a still larger proportion of the Chinese produce export trade, was in the hands of these firms. They had very considerable engagements with the local British and neutral banks and with the Chinese merchants of the Colony, and many of the leading London finance houses were also interested in their shipments. The stocks held by them in the Colony at the outbreak of war were estimated as exceeding \$6,000,000 in value. The magnitude of the British and neutral banking and other financial interests concerned, the position of the Chinese merchants who had contracts of purchase or sale with the German firms, the danger of dislocating the local markets, the existence of the large stocks held by the firms in question and the desirability of treating the private property and interests of enemy subjects with a consideration which it

was still hoped would also be shown by the enemy, seemed to render it desirable to interfere as little as possible with existing contracts.

Accordingly, at the beginning of the war, licences were issued to the local German firms with the general intention of enabling them to carry out their existing obligations and to dispose of their stocks in the Colony and of goods shipped before the outbreak of war or ordered from England before the war. They were also allowed to carry out existing export contracts. The jurisdiction of the Prize Court and the rights of allied powers were saved in the licences. Safeguards were imposed in order to prevent the remission of money, or the exportation of goods, to enemy territory. As regards fresh transactions enemy subjects were licensed generally to trade, but only on their own account and not for the benefit of partners or principals in enemy territory. Both the above types of licence were expressed to be revocable in the absolute discretion of the Governor.

So matters stood until the end of October 1914, when it was decided that all enemy subjects should be either expelled or interned. This decision, which was not aimed at German trade but was made for other reasons, created a new problem, i. e., how to deal with the property and businesses of the enemy subjects expelled or interned. The suddenness of the measure made the problem all the more acute. It was decided that the businesses should be wound up as soon as possible, and that in such winding up existing contracts should be carried out so far as possible in order to avoid dislocating the trade of the Colony generally. An ordinance to provide for this liquidation was passed, and liquidators were found mainly among the British merchant firms. The liquidations were carried out with great care and with considerable success. Many of them gave very great trouble, especially in the case of those firms where the assets were insufficient to meet all the liabilities. The number of firms wound up was 30, there were 37 liquidations of the private affairs of individuals, and there were also 16 supplementary liquidation orders which were necessary for the purpose of carrying out the firm liquidations. The total gross amount realized in all the liquidations was over \$16 millions. The surplus assets were handed over to the Custodian of Enemy Property, and the greater part of these surplus



assets, amounting to over £685,000, was invested in British Government War Loans.

As has been stated, one feature of the liquidations was that all existing contracts were carried out as far as possible. Another feature was that no discharge from any unsatisfied liabilities was given by the ordinances which governed the liquidations. In several cases the assets realized proved insufficient to discharge the local liabilities. As in most of these cases the local business was only a portion of a larger business carried on in Germany, China, and elsewhere, where the assets were not available to creditors, and as the question of the solvency of the firm as a whole could not be ascertained, there was no justification for applying the discharge given under the bankruptcy law in respect of all provable debts. In other respects, however, the liquidation ordinances were based more or less closely on the law relating to bankruptcy.

The process of liquidation was inevitably lengthy and complicated. The greatest care had to be exercised in order to avoid dislocation of the market and unnecessary loss to British and other non-enemy creditors of the German firms, and one among other sources of difficulty was that a large amount of property en route to the firms in liquidation was on board German and Austrian ships in neutral ports of the Far East. The treatment of this sheltering cargo was a most troublesome matter, some of it did not reach Hong Kong until after the Armistice, and in certain cases the question whether the cargo could be brought forward affected the probable solvency of an estate. The case was briefly as follows: At the outbreak of war a number of enemy merchant ships took refuge at various ports in the Netherlands East Indies, Portuguese India, and the Philippines. Many of these ships had on board goods consigned to British, allied, neutral, and German firms in Hong Kong, some being free goods and some being under lien to British, allied, and neutral banks. Some of this cargo was technically of enemy character. Non-enemy owners were authorized to make to the enemy shipowners the payments necessary for the purpose of obtaining possession of their cargo. Non-enemy banks received licences to bring forward enemy cargo under lien to them, and they were allowed to sell the cargo under the direction of the proper officer of the Crown. They were permitted to retain the amount of their lien, the

expenses incurred in obtaining possession of the cargo and bringing it forward, and the cost of the sale of the cargo in Hong Kong, while the surplus, if any, was, under the conditions of the licences, paid into the Prize Court for the purpose of being condemned to the Crown, should the cargo prove to have been of enemy character. Where the banks' liens had been discharged by the payment of the relative bills after the outbreak of war the consignees were allowed to bring the cargo forward under licence and to sell it on a similar condition, i. e., that any surplus after allowing for the amounts of the bills, and the expenses incurred in obtaining possession of the goods and bringing them forward, should be paid into the Prize Court for adjudication. The German firms which were being wound up in Hong Kong were treated for this purpose as non-enemy firms.

Judged by revenue returns, Hong Kong prospered amazingly during the war. In 1914, in spite of the initial effect of the war, almost universally reflected in decline of receipts, the revenue was larger than ever before, and at the end of the year there was an ample surplus in the Colonial Treasury. The surplus was converted into a deficit in 1915, but only through a very large increase of extraordinary expenditure in that year due to charging to current account much expenditure on railway construction which in normal times would have been met by loan. The revenue of 1915 showed a further increase, that of 1916 a very great increase, and the figures mounted throughout the war. The revenue for 1918 was in figures much more than double that of 1913. This result was not appreciably due to increased taxation. Duties on tobacco were imposed by an ordinance of 1916 and a substantial sum was forthcoming from this source, while an estate duty was levied under an ordinance of 1915. But war taxes, as such, were rather conspicuous by their absence, the war rate, to which reference has already been made, being raised for the specific purpose of making a contribution to the war expenses of the Empire and not for that of making two ends meet in the Colony. They more than met; the elimination of the Germans from Kiaochow may have had something to say in the matter, but imports and exports did not tell the same tale, as the revenue, and in the last year of the war there was a great falling-off in trade and shipping. Fortunately the trade routes across the Pacific

were comparatively safe, Japanese vessels were to hand to supply in part the lack of British shipping, and Japan and America became in a growing degree markets for the trade of Hong Kong. Nor was this closely-packed community seriously straitened at any time for the necessities of life, or crippled by the increased cost of living, though the Governor exercised, from time to time, his power to regulate prices. Only after the war was over was there a shortage of rice with corresponding high price, due to untoward conditions on the mainland of China. Content under British rule and protection, freed from any possibility of German menace, and in charge of a Governor who had a life experience of their mode of living and trend of thought, the overwhelming Chinese population gave no cause for anxiety but identified their own interests with those of the Empire, as standing for justice and freedom of life and trade. Hong Kong, in the modest words of the Annual Report, played 'a small but steadfast' part in the war. The Colony fared well and deserved to do so, for 'Hong Kong gave of her best in money and in men of British race'.

## APPENDIX TO SECTION II

### THE HONG KONG AND SINGAPORE MOUNTAIN BATTERY<sup>1</sup>

THE Hong Kong and Singapore Mountain Battery, which did good service in Egypt, Sinai, and Palestine, is now (1924) known as No. 1 Pack Battery, Hong Kong and Singapore Brigade, Royal Artillery. Its present armament consists of six 3.7" howitzers, and its personnel of 5 British officers, 4 Indian officers, 4 British other ranks, and 268 Indian other ranks. The Indians are recruited in the Punjab, and are partly Sikhs, partly Punjabi Mohammedans; the service is extremely popular, as the Hong Kong and Singapore Royal Artillery is an Imperial unit in all respects, with special status, rates of pay, rations, &c., and its members are very proud of belonging to the Regular British Army.

At the very beginning of the Colony of Hong Kong, in 1841,

<sup>1</sup> For help in compiling this note the Editor has been greatly indebted to Major-General Sir Dudley Ridout, K.B.E., C.B., C.M.G., and to Lieutenant-Colonel T. M. Wakefield, D.S.O., R.A.

a company of China Gun Lascars, consisting mainly of Madrasis, was raised for local artillery service, but, coming down to more modern days, the nucleus of the mountain battery was No. 1 Company of the Hong Kong and Singapore Royal Garrison Artillery. This battalion was first authorized in September 1897, and actually constituted in 1898, when the local artillery companies at Mauritius, Ceylon, Singapore, and Hong Kong were formed into two battalions; one consisting of the local companies in Ceylon and Mauritius, and styled the Ceylon and Mauritius Battalion R.G.A.; the other consisting of the local companies in Hong Kong and Singapore, and styled the Hong Kong Singapore Battalion R.G.A., now the Hong Kong and Singapore Brigade, Royal Artillery. Ten years later, in 1908, the Ceylon and Mauritius Battalion was disbanded, and its No. 1 Company was added to the Hong Kong Singapore Battalion, as it was then styled. The present composition of the Hong Kong and Singapore Brigade is No. 1 Pack Battery and four batteries Coast Defence and Movable Armament. One of these latter is sent every two years to Singapore. For at least two years before the war No. 1 Company of the Hong Kong Singapore Battalion had been armed with 10-pounder mountain guns drawn by mules, and for a while it was trained with a mountain battery of the Indian Army, then stationed at Hong Kong. On the declaration of war the local defence scheme was put into force at Hong Kong, and the company manned both movable armament and the coast defences until September 1915.

In that month, as the result of an application to the War Office from the officer commanding the battalion that it should be represented in the war, a cable was received ordering a four gun (10-pounder) mountain battery to be formed. It was decided to make the existing No. 1 Company, then in Hong Kong, the nucleus of this battery, and to complete it with drafts from No. 5 Company at Singapore and No. 4 Company in Mauritius. In October instructions were received that the battery would be a six-gun (10-pounder) battery with an establishment of 3 British officers, 3 Indian officers, and 205 other ranks.

The battery embarked on the 8th of November 1915, picked up a draft at Singapore, and proceeded to Suez. It entrained for Moascar near Ismailia, where it was joined by details from

Mauritius, and it was then attached to the Imperial Service Cavalry Brigade. In December the right and centre sections of the battery were employed on the line of the canal, and in February and March 1916 the whole unit took part in the operations against the Senussi. In September and October 1916 the battery was in action to a small extent against the Turks at El Mazar and Bir el Mageibra. It was then ordered to Abbasia, where camels were substituted for mules. It was now attached to the Imperial Camel Corps Brigade, became part of the Desert Mounted Corps, and saw fighting at Maghdaba on the 23rd of December 1916 and at Rafah on the 9th of January 1917. The equipment in guns was then changed from 10-pounder to 2.75", the latter guns being first used at Gaza. The battery took part in the two battles of Gaza of the 26th of March and the 19th of April 1917. In October 1917 it helped to cover the cavalry attack on Beersheba, and at the end of November 1917 it was in position overlooking Jerusalem, where it remained till the fall of that place. It served in the Amman fighting in 1918 and returned to Hong Kong in that year. One British and 3 Indian officers were killed, and 8 Indian other ranks were wounded in the second battle of Gaza. One soldier was killed and several were wounded before Jerusalem. The awards included 1 D.S.O., 1 M.C., 4 D.C.M.s, and 3 M.M.s.

## SECTION III

### WEI-HAI-WEI<sup>1</sup>

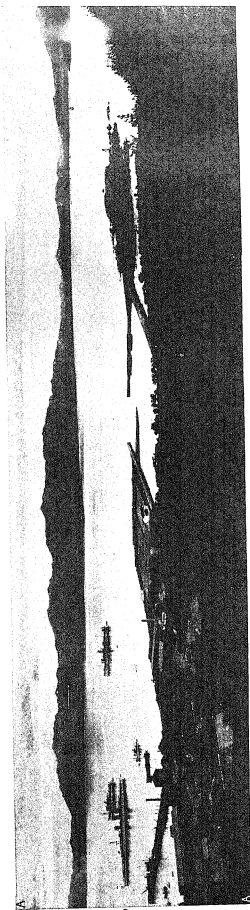
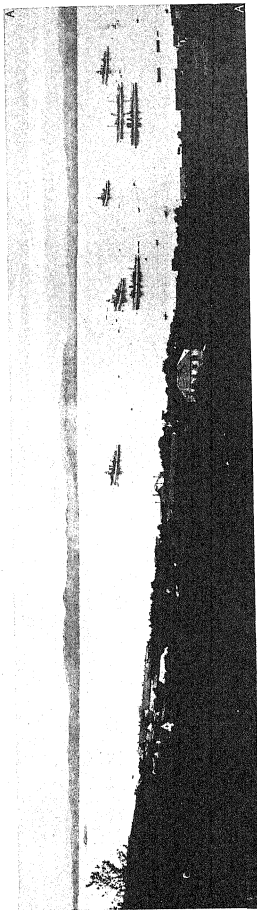
By a Convention signed on the 1st of July 1898 the territory of Wei-hai-wei was leased to Great Britain by the Chinese Government 'in order to provide Great Britain with a suitable harbour in north China and for the better protection of British commerce in the neighbouring seas'. Situated at the north-eastern end of the Shantung peninsula, the territory included the bay of Wei-hai-wei with the island of Liu Kung and the opposite mainland coast, 72 miles in length and to a depth of 10 miles inland. The leased area covered 288 square miles, about twice the size of the Isle of Wight, with a population of some 154,000 Chinese villagers and agriculturists; and outside it, within an area of 1,500 square miles, Great Britain was given by the Convention certain rights for defence purposes. Port Edward, on the mainland, on the north coast of the harbour, was the seat of government. Occupied at a special time and for special reasons, Wei-hai-wei, a very fine natural harbour, was at first intended to be, as it had been in Chinese hands prior to the war between China and Japan in 1894-5, a fortified naval base, but the intention was not carried out. In 1901 it was placed under the Colonial Office, Mr. (afterwards Sir) J. H. Stewart Lockhart, K.C.M.G., who had been Colonial Secretary of Hong Kong, was appointed Civil Commissioner, and in his charge it remained up to and throughout the war. The laws were made by the Commissioner under the Wei-hai-wei Order in Council of 1901, and, after the disbandment in 1906 of the Chinese regiment, which had done good service at the time of the Boxer Rising, a small body of police, largely recruited from men who had served in the regiment, was the only nucleus of a defence force. In the summer months the port was visited by the ships of the China Squadron,

<sup>1</sup> In accordance with the decision taken at the Washington Conference of 1921-2 Wei-hai-wei is to be given back to China.

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INDIA

# WEI-HAI-WEI HARBOUR







and the good climate made Wei-hai-wei a sanatorium for visitors from the tropics farther south.

There had been a bad drought before the war, until the middle of July 1914, followed by heavy rains and severe storms in the autumn and winter. The crops suffered, and the outbreak of war caused a fall in exchange, curtailed the tourist season and called away the fleet, no British ship of war visiting Wei-hai-wei, after the fall of Tsingtao, until towards the end of 1918. There was a tendency to panic among the Chinese population; German methods were familiar in China, and there were apprehensions of German success. The blockade and subsequent fall of Tsingtao restored confidence, and not a little of the coast trade which had been fed from Tsingtao, as soon as that port was blockaded, passed to Wei-hai-wei. The dependency was not self-supporting and received a small annual grant from the Imperial Exchequer, but year by year throughout the war the revenue increased, although Wei-hai-wei was a free port and the Government received nothing from customs duties. In one year, 1916, it was found possible to dispense with a grant in aid. Trade returns mounted in like manner, the list of exports being headed by ground nut kernels, and towards the end of 1916 a special stimulus was given to trade by an agency which was the outcome of the war. This was a depot for raising a Chinese Labour Corps for work in France.

In October 1916<sup>1</sup> the War Office accepted proposals which had, some time earlier, been submitted by the Legation in Peking, and decided to recruit Northern Chinese labour for France, carrying out the collection, equipment, and shipping of the coolies under the aegis of the Government of Wei-hai-wei. The War Office sent out its own representative, Mr. T. J. Bourne, a civil engineer of twenty-eight years' experience with Chinese labour, who arrived in Wei-hai-wei on the 1st of November 1916. The Wei-hai-wei Government had already secured the use of the coolie depot which had been built but never used by the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association for the South African Labour scheme of 1903-4.

German influence throughout China was, naturally, directed against the scheme, and the Chinese Government was not

<sup>1</sup> This account was supplied by the authorities of the War Office Labour depot through the Wei-hai-wei Government.

willing to give its consent to an official agreement. However, the Chinese people were willing to go, and the first transport sailed on the 18th of January 1917, with 1,088 Chinese coolies, and was followed by 24 other transports; the number of Chinese of all ranks sent up to January 7th, 1918, when the last transport left Wei-hai-wei, being 44,448. Including the men sent from the port of Tsingtao, the ultimate strength sent abroad was 92,582, or nearly double the number formerly sent to the South African mines.

In March 1918, when the demand for shipping had—mainly due to the transport of American troops—altogether outgrown the supply, the Government were reluctantly compelled to cease recruiting Chinese labour. The Chinese won for themselves a very good and well-deserved reputation among the British in France; and it seems probable that, had the Admiralty been able to supply transports, the demand for them would have continued as long as the war lasted. At the time when emigration was suspended, special efforts had been ordered to increase the supply of mechanics and skilled labour; showing that appreciation of Chinese was extending beyond the sphere of common labour.

Of the men sent from Wei-hai-wei about one-third were natives of the Shantung province, and two-thirds Chihli men who came via Tientsin and Chinwangtao. The number of recruits supplied from within the boundary of the actual territory of Wei-hai-wei was not large. This may be considered a compliment to British administration, the Chinese within the territory being too safe and comfortable to risk the offer of serving abroad, even at very favourable rates and under the same protection. The coolies were officered by British officer-candidates from all over China, who, after volunteering their services and being accepted by H.M.'s Minister, reported at Wei-hai-wei and were put in charge of companies of from 300 to 500 men whom they took out to France via Vancouver, Halifax, and Liverpool. Each contingent was fully organized in companies, platoons, and sections, and a Chinese N.C.O. was selected for charge of each unit. The companies were drilled and disciplined, route marched and paraded in the depot at Wei-hai-wei, and the order, safety, and comfort on board ship and on the long voyage depended on the state of discipline attained before sailing.

The considerations given to the ordinary labourer in return for his services were as follows : A bonus of \$20 on the transport leaving ; \$10,00 per mensem 'separation' pay to his family from the date of sailing to the date of repatriation : one franc per diem to the coolie from arrival in to departure from France : all food, clothing, housing, medical attendance, &c. &c. for the whole period of service. The N.C.O.s, interpreters, mechanics, and other ratings received higher pay in proportion to their positions. In order to pay the monthly family allotment, a Pay Office was set up in the old barracks of the Wei-hai-wei Regiment, and by arrangement with the Chinese Government Postal Administration, a branch money order office was established in the same buildings. By these means the allotments of 44,000 families were arranged and paid from Wei-hai-wei in the most satisfactory manner possible.

The experience of the War Office organization, whose staff was in the main composed of men of wide experience of work in other parts of China, all went to show that it was of great advantage to be free of Chinese officialdom and to be at liberty to pursue the work in a clean, well-ordered, and well-governed British territory. The naval depot was also of great assistance : for defence in case of trouble ; by the use of their workshops and plant ; and by the help they gave in lightening off all the coolies under efficient naval control ; and finally, the harbour of Wei-hai-wei was admirably adapted for the reception of the largest *Empress* and other liners acting as transports, which had merely to drop anchor in deep water near the depot.

After the conclusion of the Armistice the Secretary of State for the Colonies telegraphed 'The Labour Force, recruited through the efforts of the staff at Wei-hai-wei, has performed services of great value, and the loyal support of the Government by the Chinese community is highly appreciated'.

The following return of subscriptions to war funds and charities was supplied by the Wei-hai-wei administration<sup>1</sup> :

<sup>1</sup> This statement was in the main compiled by Mr. E. A. Sly, at the time acting Senior District Officer, who with Mr. P. D. Crawley, financial assistant, did much to help on the funds.

<i>Nature of Fund or Charity.</i>	<i>Mexican Dollars.</i>	<i>£</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Prince of Wales' Fund . . . . .	—	284	3	10
Belgian Relief Fund . . . . .	—	315	12	7
Belgian Children's Christmas Fund . . . . .	—	32	18	1
British Red Cross Society and Order of St. John of Jerusalem . . . . .	—	1,415	11	1
Blinded Soldiers' and Sailors' Care Committee . . . . .	—	240	11	5
H.M. The King's Fund for the Disabled . . . . .	—	11	6	10
Various War Charities through St. John's and St. James's Churches . . . . .	2,676-33			
British Women's Work Associations . . . . .	2,303-39			
Exhibition of British Official War Films . . . . .	176-76			
North China Aeroplane Fund . . . . .	389-65			
Imperial War Famine Fund . . . . .	—	34	16	10
Royal Air Force Memorial Fund . . . . .	—	31	11	10
Zeebrugge Memorial Fund . . . . .	—	24	0	7
St. Dunstan's Hostel . . . . .	153-00			
Collected on Red Cross 'Our Day' and earmarked for North China Famine Relief Fund . . . . .	624-16			
	<hr/> 6,323-29	<hr/> 2,390	<hr/> 13	<hr/> 1

This return does not include in any way private contributions which may have been made to war funds by residents of Wei-hai-wei, or gifts which were made from time to time to the Soldiers' and Sailors' Tobacco Fund. With the exception of the Prince of Wales' Fund and the British Women's Work Association, the balance of the funds was subscribed during the summer seasons, the visitors contributing generously, and subscription lists being supplemented by gymkhanas, concerts, and theatricals, at which all the staging was erected free of charge by a patriotic Chinese building contractor. Only once was an appeal made to the Chinese population, in the case of the Belgian Relief Fund, with the result that out of a total of \$3,717 the Chinese in the territory subscribed \$1,775. The ladies of Wei-hai-wei were in no way behind other daughters of the Empire in keen and effective war work, prominent among them being Miss Stewart Lockhart, daughter of the Commissioner, Mrs. Sly, Mrs. Stewart, and Mrs. Whittaker.

The news of the declaration of the Armistice was warmly received at Wei-hai-wei, and a new pier, which was formally opened by the Commissioner on the 18th of November 1918, received the name of 'Victory Pier' 'to commemorate the victories of the Allies and of the United States of America'.

## SECTION IV

### BRITISH COMMUNITIES IN NORTH CHINA AND JAPAN

In the second volume of this work a short notice was given of the war efforts of British citizens or descendants of British citizens, who, when the war came, were resident outside the Empire in Latin America, especially in Argentina. It was given, as was stated, to illustrate the extent to which the call of 'the Old Country', heard and answered in foreign lands, inspired personal fighting service, together with rich contributions to British and Allied war funds and charities. One more illustration of a similar character is now taken from the Far East, from North China and Japan. It follows naturally on the war records of Hong Kong and Wei-hai-wei, and forms a worthy final pendant to *The Empire at War*.

British trade in China is of very early date in our overseas history, and, after the first Treaty Ports in China were opened, from 1842 onwards, they became the dwelling places, though not the permanent homes, of numbers of British merchants and their employees, who formed strong, wealthy, and public-spirited communities, the strongest among them being at Shanghai. British trading firms were, and are, equally in evidence in Japan; and here, during the war, they were fortunate in being residents in the land of an active and powerful ally.

Many volunteers went to fight from Shanghai, Tientsin, Hankow, and other trading centres in China and Japan, and a considerable proportion of these young men, who had the will but not the means to join the fighting forces at the other end of the world, were enabled to do so by the liberality of members of the China Association at the respective ports. Only the roughest estimate of the total number of volunteers is possible, and this is given in the following memorandum

supplied by Mr. H. C. Wilcox, Secretary of the China Association in London.<sup>1</sup>

'British residents in China and Japan, though, with the exception of Hong Kong, not within the heading of the "Empire", were amongst the first to respond to the call for men, on the outbreak of war in 1914. By the end of August the first contingent had left Shanghai, and it was followed at intervals of a few weeks by others. These men came from all parts of China and were volunteers, leaving the occupations at which they had been engaged for years and in very many instances paying their own passages to England. This voluntary spirit was manifest throughout the war. A high percentage of the men, particularly in the early days of the war, were granted commissions in the Army almost upon arrival in this country.

'It has been stated on the highest authority that their adaptability, devotion, and sense of duty were of the highest; and that they possessed the courage and grit of their race, the honours they gained and the heavy toll of death in their ranks will show. Their representatives were to be found in every arm of the Services: in the line battalions, the Engineers, Machine Gun Corps, the Tanks, the Artillery, the Cavalry, Royal Flying Corps, Special Service, and from the battleship to the mine-sweeper; from the Western Front to Salonika, and, in later days, as special volunteers to Russia. Large numbers served with the Chinese Labour Corps; many who had been wounded and were unfitted for further service in the line joined and served in that Corps until demobilized. Several members of the contingents reached the rank of Brigadier-General and Lieutenant-Colonel.

'Of the total number who joined the Forces it is regretted that accurate figures cannot be given, since in the case of men coming from so many parts of China no official record seems to have been kept.

'From one source, up till September 1917, the record is in the neighbourhood of 1800, but in the writer's opinion, and he was closely connected with the contingents throughout the war, a much higher figure would be more nearly correct—somewhere about 2,500.

'It was also found impossible, at least in London, to keep count of the numbers killed and wounded. From the source mentioned above the killed totalled 186, and the wounded 190—that is up till September 1917—but these figures are

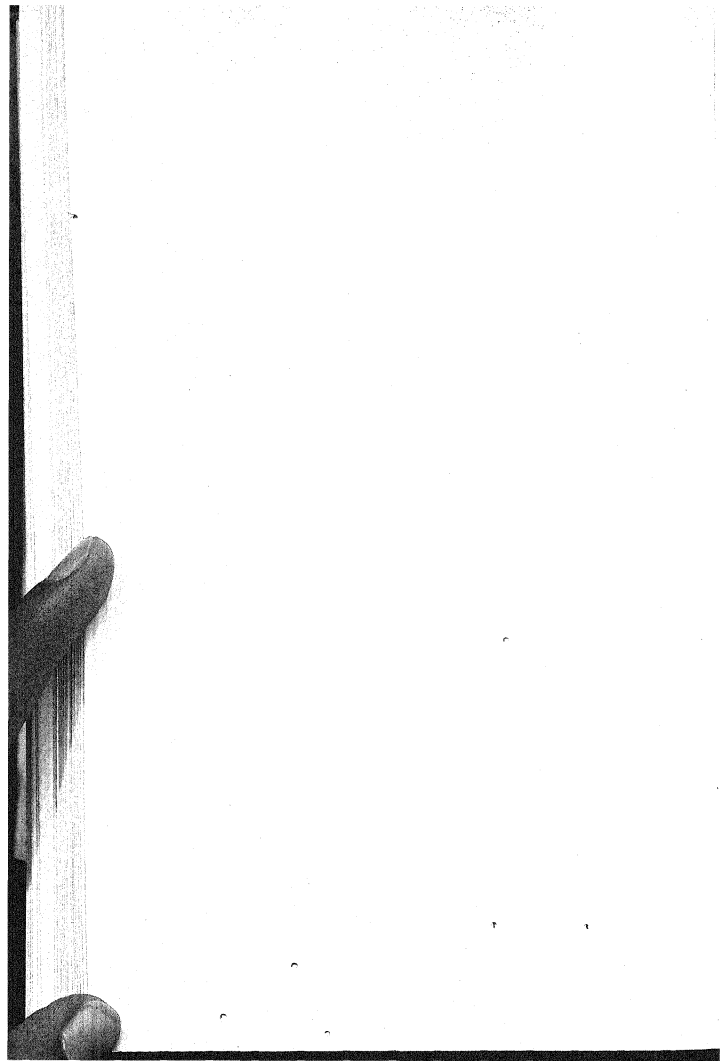
<sup>1</sup> In addition to this memo. Mr. Wilcox, with infinite trouble, collected and supplied the material which has been condensed in the text. The illustration was also procured through his good offices. The editor is greatly indebted to him and to the China Association.



THE SHANGHAI WAR MEMORIAL

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incomplete, since the Memorial in Shanghai Cathedral alone commemorates the sacrifice of 300 lives.

'The honours gained were numerous. We know of 3 V.C.s, 10 D.S.O.s, 38 M.C.s, 8 M.M.s, 2 Medals Legion of Honour, 5 D.C.M.s, and 13 were Mentioned in Despatches. No doubt there were many more. Prisoners taken by the Germans were few, about a round dozen in all.'

The names of the three officers who gained the Victoria Cross were: Captain C. C. Foss (also D.S.O.) of the 2nd Bedford Regiment; Major W. H. Johnston, Royal Engineers, killed in action; and Lieutenant C. Martin (also D.S.O.) Royal Engineers.

As it is impossible to give any accurate statistics of the numbers of young British citizens who went to fight from China, so also no authorized statement is forthcoming of the total contributions made in money or kind to war funds and charities by or through British residents or organizations of British residents in these countries. That the contributions were very large is beyond all question. For instance, the total sum subscribed to British war funds from Shanghai alone, up to the end of 1917 only, and only so far as the gifts were recorded in official reports, is returned at £608,000, of which £440,000 were invested through the China and Japan War Savings Association, and £168,000 subscribed directly to war funds and charities. Of the latter sum, British war charities received £116,000, £23,000 were devoted to comforts for sailors and soldiers, £15,000 to aircraft, and £7,000 to allied war charities. Among smaller items, £2,500 were given to a Fly Trap Fund, which was started in Shanghai in September, 1916, and the Hon. Treasurer of which was Mr. H. H. Read. Automatic fly traps had been invented in Japan prior to the war, and the plague of flies carrying and aggravating disease in camps and hospitals, more especially on the Mediterranean and Eastern Fronts, at Salonika and in Malta, in Egypt and Palestine, and in Mesopotamia, called forth a supply of these traps, which were welcomed by the medical authorities and by the Red Cross, and used, in summer-time, on the Western Front as well.

The China and Japan War Savings Association was started at Shanghai in September, 1916. Its special object was to enable the poorer class of investors to lend their money, in

sums however small, to the British Government at the best advantage to themselves. The Chairman of the General Committee was the British Consul-General, the late Sir Everard Fraser, and the Hon. Secretary and Treasurer, to whom the Association owed much, was Mr. G. F. Goodale. The clerical work was throughout done by volunteers, foreigners and Chinese giving unpaid help ; all other expenses were guaranteed by 25 of the members ; and the whole of the subscriptions, without any deduction of any kind, were telegraphed to London month by month and invested in war securities. The initial number of members in September 1916 was 120, in October Hankow joined the Association ; it was followed by other treaty ports in North China ; November saw the adhesion of Japan, where Mr. E. S. Wilkinson, of Yokohama, took the lead, and at the end of 1916 the 120 members had grown to 707. The Association styled itself 'The Pioneer Association in the Far East', and so it was. It gave a lead, in China, to the Hong Kong and South China Association, and to the Canton Association, and in the Malay Peninsula, to the War Loan Trust of Malaya. The last subscription list was issued in January 1919 and the final statement of accounts was brought up to the 30th of November in that year. The number of members in January 1919, including Chinese subscribers, was 3,857, and the Association was the medium of investing £1,038,495 in British Government securities. It was also indirectly responsible for a still larger investment, through the banks, amounting approximately to £1,200,000. This latter sum was the outcome of a Far Eastern Tank Week Campaign, which was initiated and organized by the Publicity Committee of the Association at the instance of Mr. W. L. Gerrard. It was carried out in the months of May to July 1918 at Shanghai, Hankow, and, in Japan, at Kobe, Yokohama, and Tokyo. A Foreign Tank Week at Shanghai produced over £455,000, of which the British population, including Indians, subscribed over £413,000. A Chinese Tank Week at the same port realized £119,000. A sum of £94,000 was raised at Hankow, and nearly £581,000 in Japan, half of which was subscribed by Japanese. A considerable sporting element entered into the Tank Campaign, and the Shanghai Race Club, which had a very fine record of war effort, secured investments in the War Savings Association to the amount of \$124,000. In addition, the club raised, up

to the end of 1921, no less than \$861,000 for war and other funds and charities.

The War Savings Association had in mind from the first not merely the collection of money for the prosecution of the war, but also advertising the British and allied cause in China, and counteracting German propaganda among the Chinese, the Germans in China, as elsewhere, having been beforehand with the allies in this method of organized 'penetration'. From the beginning of the war a certain amount of propaganda work had been done by British residents in China, and pamphlets in Chinese had been compiled and circulated. But during the first two years these efforts had not been co-ordinated, and only in July 1916, after consultation with the British Minister at Peking, was a committee formed, with headquarters at Shanghai, to organize and control propagandist activities, the chairman of the committee being Mr. H. Phillips, then British Consul at Shanghai. In 1917, as has already been told,<sup>1</sup> a similar committee was formed at Hong Kong, and the two committees practically worked as one agency. In 1916 and 1917 the main function of the Shanghai Committee was the preparation, publication, and distribution of the news section of a fortnightly vernacular newspaper, the *Cheng Pao* (*The Truth*), a pictorial section of which was prepared and printed in London and forwarded to Shanghai, as the centre for distribution. The editor of the news section at Shanghai was the Rev. Dr. Darroch. Till the end of the war the *Cheng Pao*, which reached a circulation of some 175,000 copies and was sent through the Chinese Post Office to every part of China, was the staple effort of allied propaganda work in China; but in 1918, changing its name from the 'War Propaganda Committee' to the 'War Information Committee', the committee greatly extended the field of its activities. In addition to English publications, pamphlets and circulars in Chinese were distributed broadcast; a war news telegraph service was inaugurated; lectures were organized and an essay competition; and cinema-film exhibitions were given at 51 different places in China with great success. In the latest stages of the propaganda work it was extended to Siberia.

Though the accounts of the War Savings Association were closed at the end of November 1919, more than a year passed

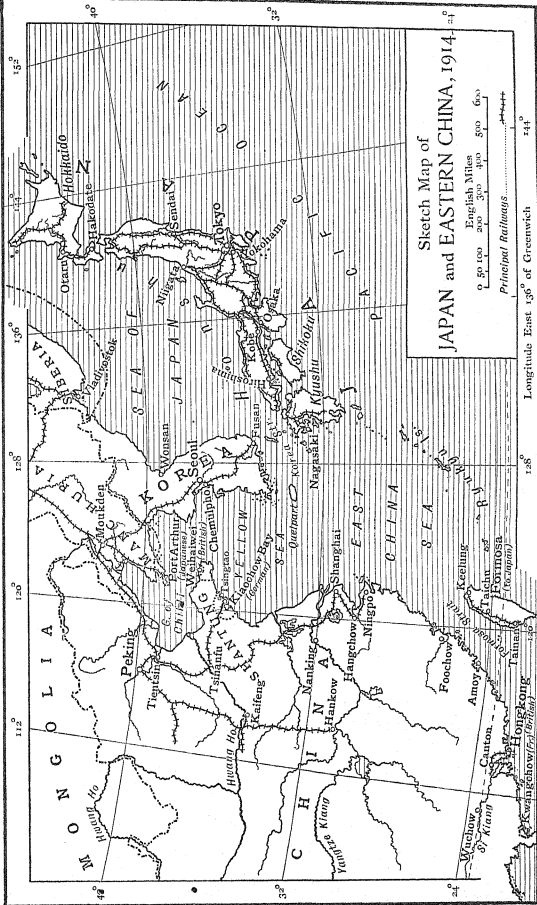
<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 442.

before, on the 1st of February 1921, a final meeting of the members was held and the Association dissolved. There was a small undistributed balance of profits, from which a subscription was given to a hospital for Chinese at Shanghai, in recognition of the voluntary work done by Chinese for the Association; and over £2,000 were handed to St. Dunstan's to form a China and Japan War Savings Association Trust for the benefit of Blinded Sailors and Soldiers.

British women in China rivalled the men in active patriotism, and very admirable was the work of the 'British Women's Work Association for our Soldiers and Sailors and their families'. The Association was the outcome of a meeting held at Shanghai on the 24th of September 1914, its depot was opened on the 1st of October 1914, and its life lasted till the end of 1919 or the beginning of 1920. The results of its work were summed up as

Garments and Hospital Requirements . . . . .	431,389
Rolled Bandages . . . . .	415,980
War Dressings . . . . .	382,891

The President and Hon. Secretary of the Executive Committee from first to last was Lady de Sausmarez, and the Hon. Treasurer was Sir Havilland de Sausmarez, Judge of the Supreme Court for China, who gave the Association the use of a room in the Court buildings for their work. An interesting feature in the Association was its representative character. From the first, 'in order to avoid the necessity of having committees and to make the work as far as possible self-governing', 'centres' were formed 'within the limits of the different professions and businesses', each of which had one or more representatives. There were, for instance, representatives of the banks, of the bar, of the police, of church and schools, of missions, of particular firms such as Butterfield & Swire, and Jardine, Matheson & Co. Each Patriotic Society, St. George's, St. Andrew's, &c., had a representative, and there was a number of Treaty Port centres in various parts of China. Even at Mukden there was a centre and, towards the end, at Vladivostok, all of them having representatives on the Association. There was an Executive Committee, an Advisory Committee of gentlemen, and the work was gradually sorted out into departments, such as a Prisoners of War Department, opened in 1917. Money and materials came from numberless



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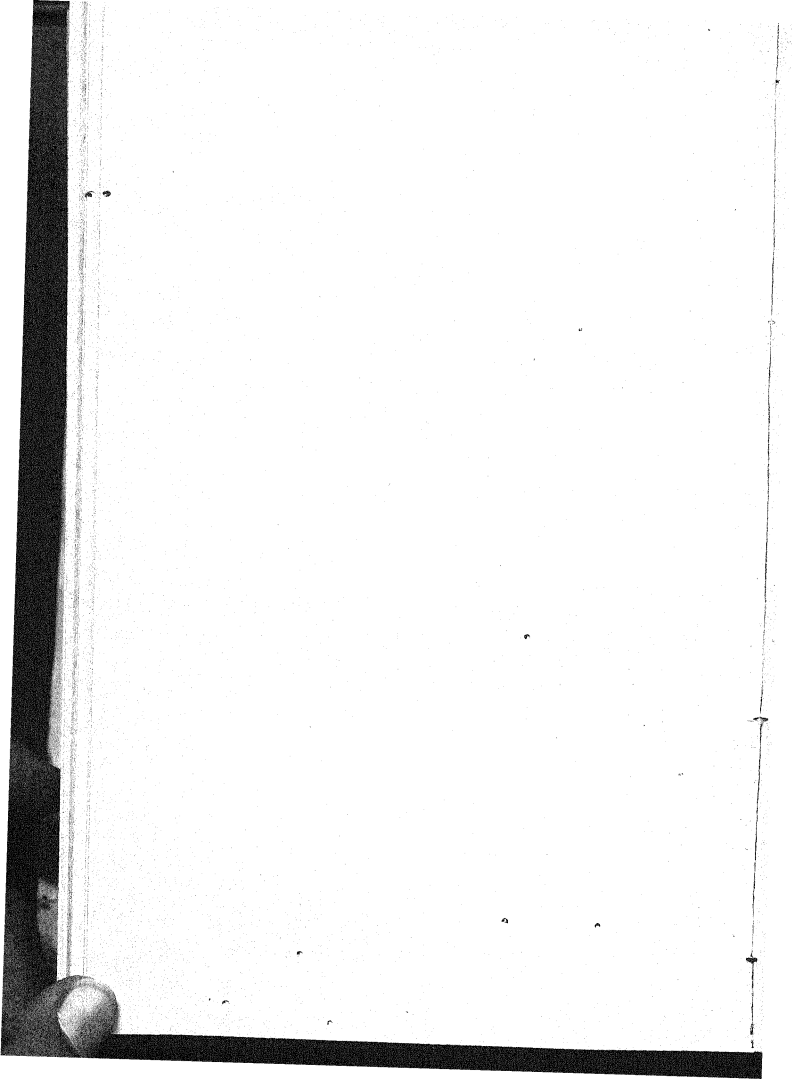
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sources, including regular subscriptions, entertainments, and special appeals. Jewish and Indian merchants gave generous help, and the Jewish community formed one of the centres.

The different directions in which the Association sent supplies from time to time were an index to the different phases of the war. At the outset the Tsingtao campaign was at the doors, and all the ladies' handiwork was sent to the base at Wei-hai-wei. After the fall of Tsingtao, the garments were dispatched to Queen Mary's Needlework Guild in England, though special calls received special attention. Thus, comforts were supplied to Shanghai men attached to the 10th Yorkshire Regiment, and a special sock department was formed for sending parcels of socks to the volunteers from China, so far as their addresses could be traced. In 1917, at the suggestion of Queen Mary's Needlework Guild, the main bulk of the articles made by the Association, among which shirts made of China silk were greatly valued, were sent to the troops and hospitals in Mesopotamia, through the Indian branch of the British Red Cross at Bombay ; but, as the war drew to a close, and after the Armistice, the Association, as at the very beginning, found a field for its activities comparatively close at hand. In September 1918 there came a telegram from Queen Mary's Needlework Guild, advising that the ladies should concentrate their work on Siberia. This was followed in October by another telegram asking the Association to take the responsibility of supplying all the clothes and dressings required for the British Red Cross hospital in Siberia. Accordingly, altering their title from ' British Women's Work Association for our Sailors and Soldiers and their Families ' to ' British Women's Work Association for our Sailors and Soldiers and for our Allies ', the Association concentrated on Siberia and sent all its supplies to Vladivostok, where it already had a centre. They were consigned at first to the British Patriotic League at that port, then, as soon as the British Red Cross Commissioner had arrived, to the British Red Cross Mission, and, after the withdrawal of the British Red Cross Mission, to the British Military Mission. Among British troops in Siberia in 1918-19 were a Middlesex battalion from Hong Kong under Colonel John Ward, a Hampshire battalion from India, and other officers and N.C.O.s sent to train and re-organize the Russians. There was a Canadian brigade and there were various allied con-

tingents. There was a unit of the Canadian Red Cross, and also of the American Red Cross, to which the Association sent large consignments of war dressings. Russian and Czech refugees and children were helped and cared for, Hong Kong sending up funds to Shanghai in aid of the relief work. In the welter of misery which prevailed in Siberia at this time the efforts of the Association were of singular value, and this last phase of its beneficence gave ample testimony that nowhere during the war was women's work better organized or more effective than at the treaty ports of China.





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## ABBREVIATIONS

Afg. = Afghanistan  
 Ara. = Arabia  
 B.E.A. = British East Africa (now Kenya)  
 B.M. = British Malaya  
 Cey. = Ceylon  
 Ch. = China  
 E.A. = East Africa  
 Eg. = Egypt  
 F.M.S. = Federated Malay States  
 Fl. = Flanders  
 Fr. = France

Gal. = Gallipoli  
 G.E.A. = German East Africa (now Tanganyika Territory)  
 Gib. = Gibraltar  
 Mes. = Mesopotamia (now Iraq)  
 Pal. = Palestine  
 Per. = Persia  
 P.G. = Persian Gulf  
 R.S. = Red Sea  
 Sin. = Sinai  
 S.S. = Straits Settlements

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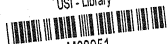


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